

Thea Stilton

AND THE FIESTA IN MEXICO



SCHOLASTIC

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HELLO, I'M THEA!

I'm *Geronimo Stilton*'s sister.

As I'm sure you know from my brother's bestselling novels, I'm a special correspondent

for *The Rodent's Gazette*, Mouse Island's most famouse newspaper. Unlike my 'fraidy mouse brother, I absolutely adore traveling, having adventures, and meeting rodents from all around the world!

The adventure I want to tell you about begins at Mouseford Academy, the school I went to when I was a young mouseling. I had such a great experience there as a student that I came back to teach a journalism class.

When I returned as a grown mouse, I met five really special students: Colette, Nicky, Pamela, Paulina, and Violet. You could hardly imagine five more different mouselings, but they became great friends right away.

And they liked me so much that they decided to name their group after me: the Thea Sisters! I was so touched by that, I decided to write about their adventures. So turn the page to read a fabumouse adventure about the

THEA SISTERS!

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colette

She has a passion for clothing and style, especially anything pink. When she grows up, she wants to be a fashion editor.



violet

She's the bookworm of the group, and she loves learning. She enjoys classical music and dreams of becoming a famous violinist.



Paulina

Cheerful and kind, she loves traveling and meeting rodents from all over the world. She has a magic touch when it comes to technology.

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THE THEA SISTERS



Nicky

She comes from Australia and is very enthusiastic about sports and nature. She loves being outside and is always ready to get up and go!



Pamela

She is a great mechanic: Give her a screwdriver and she'll fix anything! She loves pizza, which she eats every day, and she loves to cook.

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Do you want to help the Thea Sisters in this new adventure? It's not hard – just follow the clues!

When you see this magnifying glass, pay attention: It means there's an important clue on the page. Each time one appears, we'll review the clues so we don't miss anything.

**ARE YOU READY?
A NEW MYSTERY AWAITS!**

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Thea Stilton

FIESTA IN MEXICO



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e-ISBN 978-1-338-80223-8

Text by Thea Stilton

Original title *Viaggio in Messico*

Art director: Iacopo Bruno

Cover by Giuseppe Facciotto, Barbara Pellizzari, and Christian Aliprandi, and Flavio Ferron

Illustrations by Barbara Pellizzari, Valeria Brambilla, Chiara Ballello, Federico Giretti, Flavio Ferron, Tommaso Valsecchi, Chiara Cebraro, and Antonio Campo

Graphics by Alice Iuri/theWorldofDOT

Special thanks to AnnMarie Anderson

Translated by Julia Heim

Interior design by Kay Petronio

First printing 2022

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A COLORFUL EXIT!

It was a beautiful morning, and Mouseford Academy was buzzing with excitement. The students were about to leave for their winter **VACATION**.

As Colette finished packing her suitcase, she turned to her friend Pamela.

“What do you think today’s **color** is, Pam?” Colette asked, her eyes twinkling.

Pamela laughed. Leave it to her stylish friend to ask a question like that!

Colette was passionate about **fashion**, and she loved anything to do with **color**: She was always up to date on the



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A COLORFUL EXIT!

hottest hues of the season, and she loved mixing clothes, bags, shoes, and bracelets to make unique outfits. Colette's **LOVE** for colors didn't stop there. The stylish mouselet had the fun habit of connecting colors to different memories and tasks. For example, a trip to the sea was the intense **BLUE** color of the waves mixed with the bright **YELLOW** of the sun. And, to Colette, an afternoon studying was brown and pink, like the tables in Mouseford Academy's library and her favorite notebook.

"Oh, there are so many colors for this morning!" Pamela replied. "There's the white of the **SNOW** outside, and the blue of my **passport**..."

"And the lilac on the cover of the latest issue of **Cosmousie** magazine," Colette added.

"Of course," Pamela agreed. "Let's not

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A COLORFUL EXIT!



forget the red from the **strawberries** in the muffins from breakfast!"

Colette smiled happily. "This morning is a **rainbow** of colors!"

At that moment, Violet, Paulina, and Nicky entered the room.

"Ready to go?" Violet asked.



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A COLORFUL EXIT!

“A-almost,” Colette stammered as she lay on top of her **STUFFED** suitcase in an unsuccessful effort to close it.

Violet couldn’t help but chuckle.

“When we said we would each bring just **one** suitcase, we meant we would also bring the amount of clothing that would fit in just **one** suitcase,” Violet reminded Colette.

“Well, maybe I put a few extra things in here that I don’t need . . .” Colette began. But before she had finished her sentence, she was interrupted by the **CLICK** of the suitcase lock as it latched shut. She quickly abandoned any thought of lightening her load.

“Perfect timing!” Colette rejoiced. “I’m all done. **Now let’s go!**”

As the five friends headed out, they bumped into their friend Tanja.

“I’m so glad to see you!” the mouselet

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A COLORFUL EXIT!

exclaimed. "I really wanted to say good-bye."

"Where will you be spending your **VACATION**?" Violet asked.

"I'm going skiing with my parents," Tanja explained. "What about all of you?"

But just then, Colette's overstuffed suitcase popped open! **CLICK!**



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Pamela burst out **laughing** and then immediately bent over to help her friend pick up the clothes and sandals that had scattered everywhere.

“Well, Colette’s suitcase is a big clue,” Tanja joked. “I’m guessing you’re going somewhere **WARM!**”

“You’re right!” Colette replied as she grabbed a straw hat and put it on her head. “We’re going to Mexico!”

“Wow!” Tanja exclaimed. “I hear Mexico is beautiful. What part?”

“We are headed to the **Monarch Butterfly Biosphere Reserve** near Mexico City in Michoacán!” Paulina replied enthusiastically. “**Dr. Meyer*** invited us to join a group of

*** DR. MAGGIE MEYER** IS A MIGRANT BUTTERFLY SCHOLAR. THE THEA SISTERS WERE LUCKY ENOUGH TO MEET HER DURING A RESEARCH EXCURSION SHE TOOK TO WHALE ISLAND.



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A COLORFUL EXIT!

volunteers helping her team with a research project on **monarch butterflies**."

"I can't wait!" Nicky added enthusiastically.

"I can't wait either, but can you give me a few minutes before we head to the **AIRPORT**?" Colette asked sheepishly, her



paws still full of the clothing that had **escaped** from her bag.

"I'll be quick!"

Without wasting another moment, Colette **DARTED**

upstairs to the room she shared with Pam. She quickly tossed the clothes she wasn't taking on the bed and

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scampered back downstairs to join her **friends**.

As she hurried down, Colette smiled dreamily. She couldn't wait to get to **Mexico** — land of the bright, beautiful palette of the gorgeous **monarch butterflies!**

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Mexico is a country in North America. It is located just south of the United States and northwest of Guatemala and Belize. The Pacific Ocean is to the west, while the Gulf of Mexico is to the east.

The **Mexican flag** is tricolored green, white, and red. The national coat of arms sits in the center of the flag. It is a golden eagle perched on a cactus holding a serpent in its talon.

Continent: North America

Official language: Spanish

Capital: Mexico City

Currency: Mexican peso

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TRAVEL BUDDIES

The **Monarch Butterfly Biosphere Reserve** was located in the state of Michoacán, a few hours from Mexico City. **Dr. Meyer** had organized the trip for the mouselets, who would be joined by two volunteers from Mexico City. They were named Blanca and Mateo, and they had agreed to meet the mouselets at the airport to give them a ride to the reserve.

As they got off the plane, the five friends looked around for the two volunteers, but they didn't see anyone.

So the mouselets took advantage of the free time to change into lighter clothing now that they had left the **cold** weather on Whale Island behind them.

“I definitely won’t need this while we’re

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here!” Pamela exclaimed happily as she stuffed her winter coat in her bag.

Once they had changed, the Thea Sisters headed outside the airport terminal to wait for their ride.

“How **fabumouse!**” Colette exclaimed as she stepped through the terminal’s sliding doors, the soft, **warm** Mexican breeze ruffling her fur.

“I wonder where Blanca and Mateo are,” Violet said, looking around. “I thought they were going to meet us here at the airport. I hope they didn’t forget about us!”

Paulina glanced at the time. “Well, they aren’t too late yet,” she pointed out. “Maybe there was **traffic**.”

“They should be about our age,” Colette recalled from the professor’s emails.

“Let’s look around for them, then,” Pamela

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said as she **SCANNED** the crowd gathered outside the terminal. “Maybe they’re waiting for us inside and we missed them.”

“**LOOK!**” Violet exclaimed suddenly. “I think that might be them!”

The Thea Sisters turned to look in the direction Violet was pointing. Sure enough, a



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van decorated with **monarch butterflies** was pulling up to the curb.

“You’re right!” Nicky said as the van stopped in front of them.

“Sorry we’re late!” a mouse with long brown hair called out from the passenger seat.

“You must be the Thea Sisters,” the driver said **WARMLY** as the mouselets climbed into the van. “I’m Mateo.”

“I’m Blanca,” the first mouse added. “And it’s all my fault we kept you waiting. I thought you’d be **HUNGRY** after your flight, so I started making *cocadas**, but then it got late!”

Blanca held out a basket of small golden treats to show them.

“Can you **forgive** us?” she asked.

Pamela took one whiff of the delicious coconut **scent** coming from the freshly **baked** cookies, and she broke into a grin.

* *Cocadas* are a traditional coconut sweet.

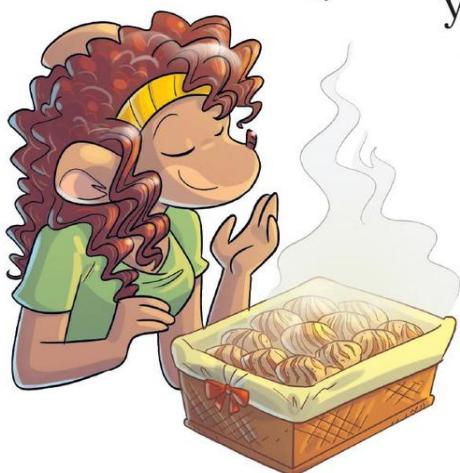
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They smell so good!



“Of course!” she squeaked happily. “For a snack like this, I would forgive you if you were ten hours late!”

Mateo steered the van back onto the road, and the group began their drive to **ANGANGUEO**, the small town where the volunteers would be staying during their visit. The Thea Sisters took advantage of the ride to get to know Blanca and Mateo better: In addition to their **love** of nature and animals, the mice had so many other things to chat about!

The Thea Sisters described their life at Mouseford Academy and explained how they had met Dr. Meyer while she was studying migrant butterflies on Whale Island. Then it

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was **Blanca** and **Mateo's** turn: The pair had known each other since they were young. In addition to being best friends, they went to school together, where they studied natural sciences and entomology.*

“So you’d both like to have careers like Dr. Meyer after you graduate,” Paulina said.

Blanca smiled. “I wish!” she said. “It would be enough to be half as good as she is!”

“I’m sure you’ll both make your **dreams** come true,” Colette said encouragingly. “And then you’ll both be entomologi-artists!”

Blanca raised her eyebrows. “Why **artists**?” she asked in surprise.

“Well, your van is painted so **beautifully**, I know one of you must be an artist!” Colette pointed out.

“Oh! That’s our friend Luz’s work,” Mateo replied, smiling. “She studies art history at the

* Entomology is the branch of zoology that focuses on the study of insects, including butterflies.

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TRAVEL BUDDIES

university, and she's also a **talented** painter."

The mouselets enjoyed chatting with Mateo and Blanca so much that the ride flew by, and they reached Angangueo by sunset.

"Welcome!" Dr. Meyer greeted the group as they unloaded their bags. "It's such a pleasure to **see** you all!"

"The pleasure is all ours," Paulina assured her. "Thank you for inviting us!"

"Yes, thanks so much," Blanca added. "It's an **HONOR** for us to be here!"



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“Oh, don’t thank me — thank yourselves!” Dr. Meyer said, smiling. “I chose all of you because I know how hard you all **work**. Now, get settled and get some good rest because tomorrow will be a **long** day!”

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A SPECIAL WELCOME

The next morning, the mouselets were up early and were soon ready to go. Right after **breakfast**, Dr. Meyer explained their role in her research project.



“Over the next few days, we will be observing various colonies of **monarch butterflies** that have migrated to the reserve for the winter,” she explained. “It will be your **job** to help out with data collection. You’ll also guide the tourists visiting the reserve and make sure they don’t **interfere** with our study.”

“I can’t wait!” Paulina whispered excitedly to Nicky.

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A SPECIAL WELCOME



“We’ll leave in a few minutes to visit the first colony of butterflies,” Dr. Meyer concluded.

As the mouselets prepared to head out for the day, Mateo and Blanca approached them.

“Good morning,” Mateo greeted them warmly. “You’re **COMING** with us, right?”

“Yes, of course!” the Thea Sisters replied **happily**. The five friends felt they had a lot in common with Blanca and Mateo, and they



The **Monarch Butterfly Biosphere Reserve**

is in the state of Michoacán in central Mexico.

Each fall, the monarch butterflies travel about 2,800 miles (4,500 km) from Canada and the United States to spend four to five months among the pine, oak, and oyamel fir trees of the Mexican forest.



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A SPECIAL WELCOME

were **excited** to spend more time getting to know their new friends.

“Then let’s go!” Blanca said, and Colette, Nicky, Paulina, Pamela, and Violet followed her and Mateo.



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The group began hiking along the trail that led through the forest where the monarch butterflies spent the winter.

“Isn’t this amazing?” Colette asked Violet as the mouselets were immersed in the scents of the forest’s plants and flowers. “I can’t believe we’re going to see butterflies that have traveled **THOUSANDS** of miles to get here.”

“It’s incredible,” Violet agreed. “Especially since they didn’t get to take a plane like we did: They flew here using tiny **WINGS** that are as thin as paper!”

“Their wings are delicate, but they’re as strong as steel, too,” Pamela pointed out. “Monarch butterflies are truly **REMARKABLE** creatures.”

“It’s true,” Blanca agreed. “As soon as you set your **EYES** on the monarchs, you’ll

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A SPECIAL WELCOME

realize how **SPECIAL** they are. You won't be able to describe the emotion you'll feel!"

"So you've been here before?" Pamela asked.

"Yes, we've both been here **MANY** times," Mateo revealed. "In fact, this is where Blanca, Luz, and I met!"



Mateo stopped squeaking suddenly and turned to the Thea Sisters with a finger to his lips.

"What is it?" Nicky whispered softly.

Mateo **pointed** to a tree a little ways off the trail. At first the others thought the branches were covered in

small orange-and-yellow leaves. But on closer inspection, the Thea Sisters realized they weren't leaves at all, but rather thousands and thousands of **butterflies**!

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A SPECIAL WELCOME

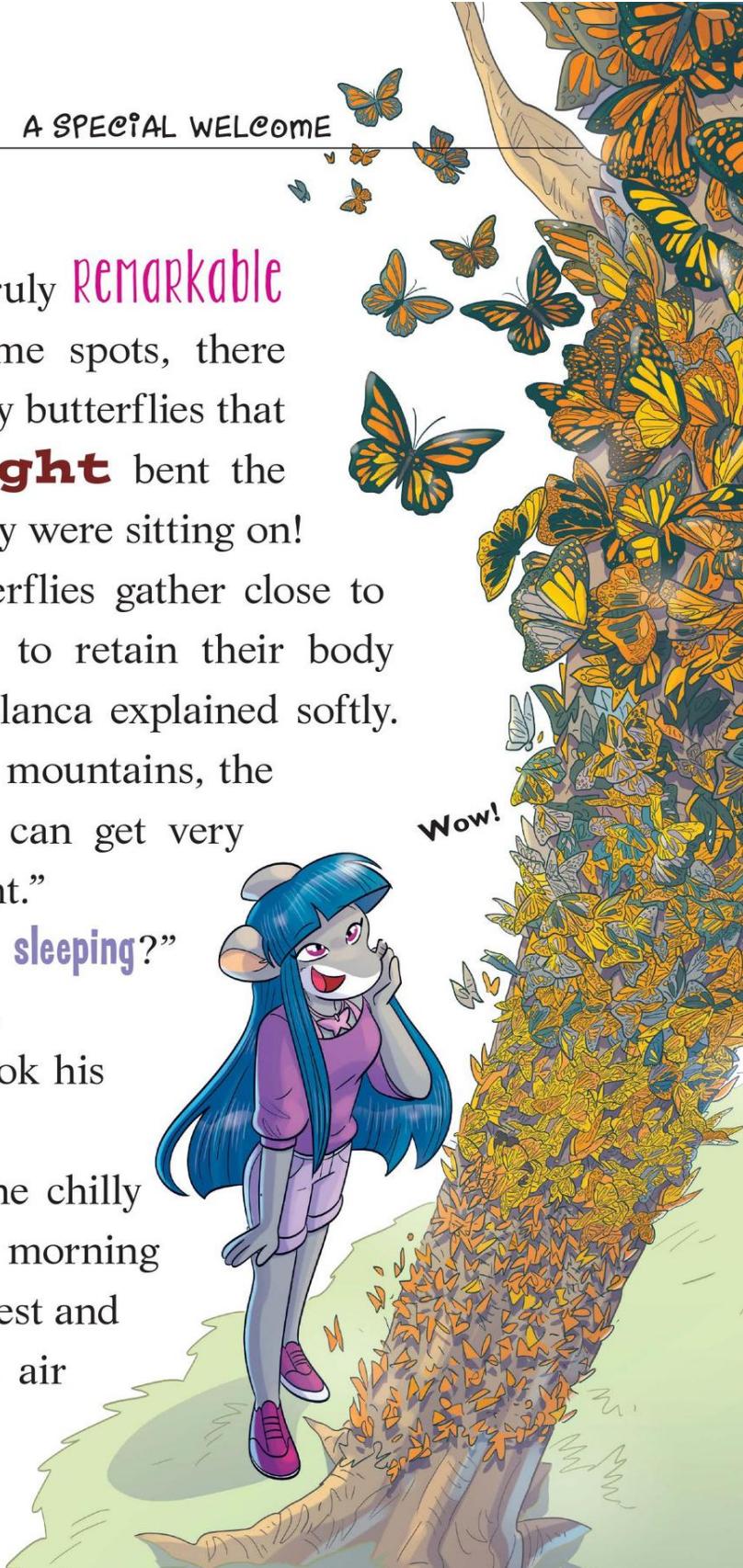
It was a truly **REMARKable** sight. In some spots, there were so many butterflies that their **weight** bent the branches they were sitting on!

“The butterflies gather close to one another to retain their body **HEAT**,” Blanca explained softly. “Here in the mountains, the temperature can get very **cool** at night.”

“Are they **sleeping**?”
Violet asked.

Mateo shook his head.

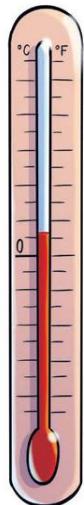
“During the chilly evening and morning hours, they rest and wait for the air



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A SPECIAL WELCOME



temperature to **warm up**,” he explained.

“How **CLEVER!**” Nicky exclaimed as she and the other Thea Sisters caught up with the rest of the researchers. They had stopped in a clearing **SURROUNDED** by trees that were completely covered with butterflies.

A moment later, the midmorning sun peered through the tops of the trees and flooded the clearing with rays of **LIGHT**. It was as if the butterflies had received a secret signal because they suddenly began to unfold their wings. Soon the sky filled with gold, black, and orange as the butterflies took flight. The flapping of millions of wings was reminiscent of the tapping of **rain** on a roof during a storm. Every one of the researchers stopped and stared up at the trees, **awestruck**.

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The students and scientists knew they were there because they had a job to do. But at that moment, all they could do was stop and stare at the stunning **monarchs** that had taken to the skies as if to greet them and wave **hello!** The group was simply astounded by the incredible sight of



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An invitation

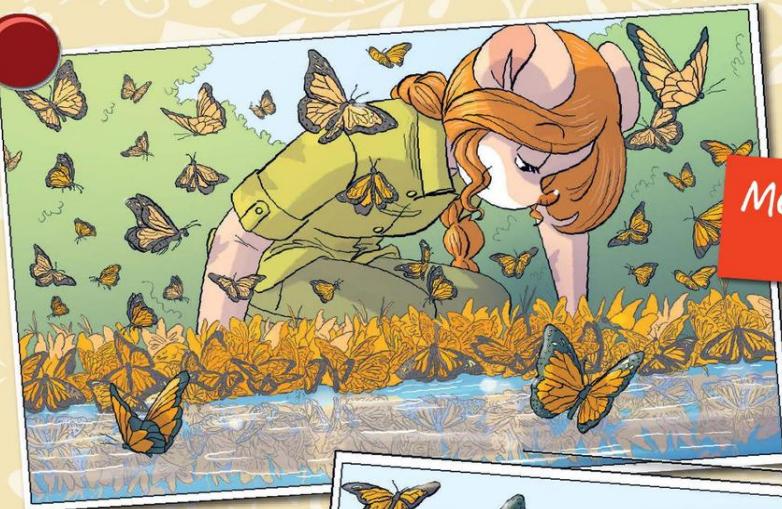
Blanca had been **RIGHT**: It was hard to find the words to describe the **FEELING** of being surrounded by thousands and thousands of magnificent **monarch butterflies**.

But Paulina quickly found a way to capture and preserve the feeling: During the days she and the Thea Sisters spent with Dr. Meyer and her team, she took **tons and tons of photographs!**

Paulina had never been one to leave her camera behind, and it was paying off on this trip. After spending her days searching for marvemouse natural **LANDSCAPES**, Paulina would upload her photos to her laptop. Then the Thea Sisters, Blanca, Mateo, and the



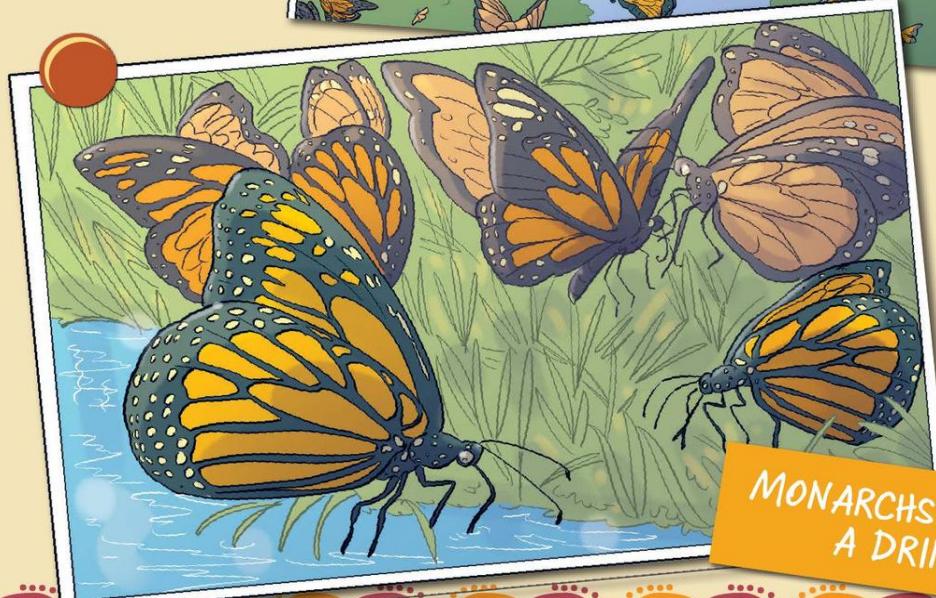
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MONARCHS LANDING
IN A BROOK



MONARCHS
IN FLIGHT



MONARCHS
TAKING
A DRINK

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other volunteers and researchers would gather around to admire her **photos**!

Before the end of the week, word of Paulina's talent as a photographer reached Dr. Meyer. One evening, the entomologist caught up with the Thea Sisters and their **friends** while they were **happily** looking at the day's photos.

“Can I join you?” the professor asked.

“**Of course, have a seat!**” the friends replied as they made room. **Dr. Meyer** sat next to Paulina.

“Are these the famous photographs I've heard so much about?” she asked, smiling.

“**Famous?**!” Paulina asked in surprise.

Dr. Meyer nodded. “Well, my colleagues have been talking about them: Everyone is **impressed** with your skill.”

Paulina **blushed**.

“Thank you,” she said shyly. “I haven't been

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AN INVITATION



doing it very long, but I really enjoy photography.”

“I would *love* to see more of your photos,” the professor said. “May I?”

“Of course!” Paulina replied eagerly.

Dr. Meyer looked at the photographs Paulina



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An invitation

had taken over the past few days. The images told such a beautiful story about these butterflies.

“Paulina, these images are even more **BEAUTIFUL** than what was described to me,” Dr. Meyer complimented the mouselet. “This is incredible work! In fact, your images are so remarkable that I would like to ask your **permission** to use them.”

“**Use them?!**” Paulina asked in surprise. “Really?”

The professor nodded.

“Yes,” she said.

“I’m giving a talk at a **conference** next week in Mexico City. I’ll be meeting with colleagues from



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all over the world, and I'll be telling them about the experience here at the reserve. Your photos would be the perfect **PAIRING** to my talk!"

"I would be honored!" Paulina replied. "I can share the files with you."

But the professor shook her head. "It would be better if you joined me," she explained. "That way you can tell everyone **how** you took these incredible shots. I think it would make the story of the reserve even more **MEANINGFUL**."

Then she turned to the other Thea Sisters. "All of you should come!" she said warmly.

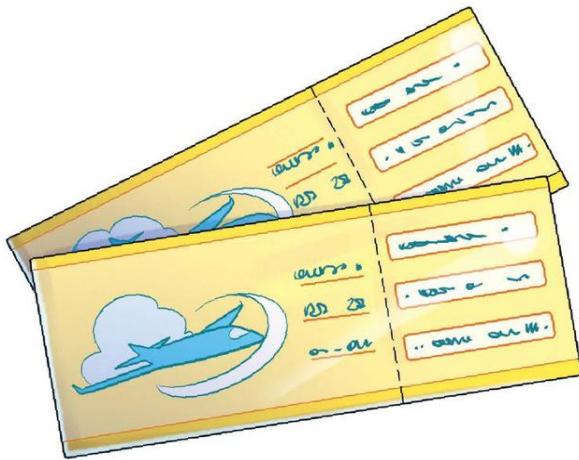
The **five friends** looked at one another, stunned. It was an incredible opportunity.

"Thank you so much," Paulina *replied*, flattered. "But there's one problem: We already booked our tickets to return to Whale Island."

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An invitation



“You could change your reservation and **delay** your departure for a few days,” Mateo suggested.

“Or do you have to get back for the start of **CLASSES** immediately?”

Pamela shook her head. “No, once we get back, we still have a few days of **VACATION**,” she said. “We would love to stay and support our friend, of course! But will we be able to find a hotel in Mexico City on such short notice?”

“Don’t be silly, you don’t need to reserve a hotel,” Blanca said. “You can **STAY** with me!”

“Really?!” Nicky asked in surprise. “**All five of us?**”

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AN INVITATION



“Of course!” Blanca said, smiling. “You’ll be my guests. It will be tight, but that’s part of the fun! This way you can **participate** in the conference and spend a few days visiting our beautiful city!”



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AN INVITATION

“It seems like a perfect plan!” Mateo agreed.

Paulina **LOOKED** at her new friends in disbelief.

“You’re all so kind,” she said. “I don’t know what to say!”

“I do,” Dr. Meyer replied, smiling.

“Tell us you’ll come!”



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nICE TO mEET YOu, LUZ!

The decision had been made: The Thea Sisters would **stay** a few extra days in Mexico as guests of their new friend Blanca. So the next day, the mouselets packed their suitcases, said good-bye to everyone at the butterfly reserve, and climbed aboard Blanca and Mateo's van. They were headed to **Mexico City!**

A short while later, Mateo pulled off the highway and turned the van down a street that led to a quiet **Residential area**. He stopped in front of a white building with a balcony decorated with pots of **BRIGHT RED** geraniums.

“How pretty!” Colette exclaimed, admiring the colorful alley. “This street looks like it’s right off a postcard!”

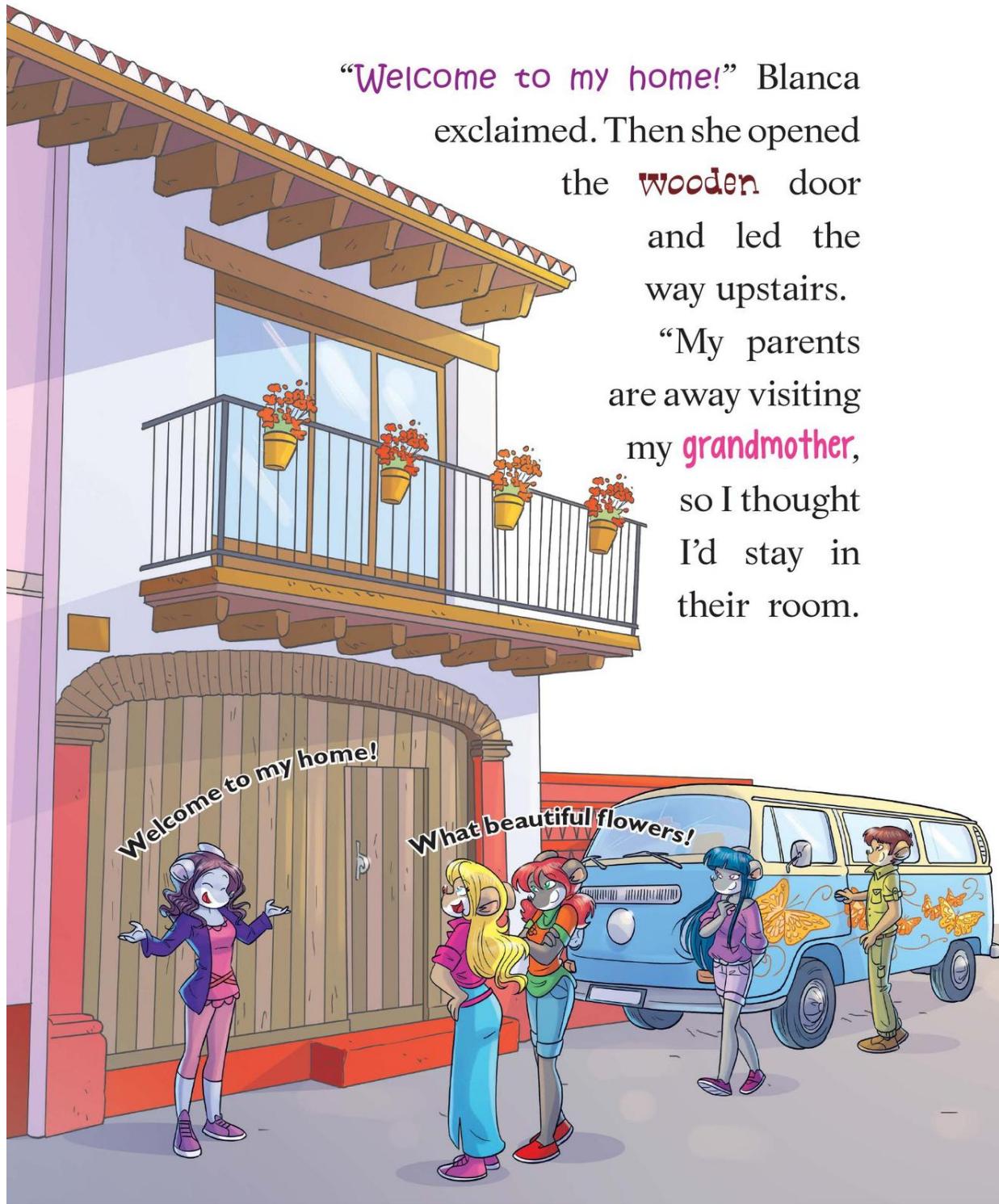
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NICE TO MEET YOU, LUZ!

“Welcome to my home!” Blanca exclaimed. Then she opened the **wooden** door and led the way upstairs.

“My parents are away visiting my **grandmother**, so I thought I’d stay in their room.



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Some of you can sleep in my bedroom, and some in the living room. Does that work?”

“That would be perfect,” Violet assured her. “Thank you so much for your hospitality!”

“I’ll leave you all to **RELAX** and get settled —” Mateo began, before he was interrupted by his phone **buzzing**. He glanced down at the message and read it. Then he broke into a huge grin. “Actually, forget what I just said. Let’s head out right away: Luz can’t wait to meet all of you!”

The group headed straight to **Plaza Garibaldi** to meet up with Blanca and Mateo’s friend. When they arrived, they were charmed by the plaza’s festive atmosphere.

“What **lively** music!” Nicky exclaimed as she and her friends were surrounded by three mice in suits and sombreros who were singing and playing instruments.

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NICE TO MEET YOU, LUZ!

“They’re **mariachi players**,” Mateo told the Thea Sisters. “They specialize in traditional Mexican music.”

“It really makes me want to **DANCE!**” Paulina exclaimed as she and the others made their way through the square, which was full of musicians performing and entertaining the crowds.

Then, suddenly, a bright, happy voice called out over the music: “Hi, mouselets!”

“**Here’s Luz!**” Blanca exclaimed, running to hug her friend.

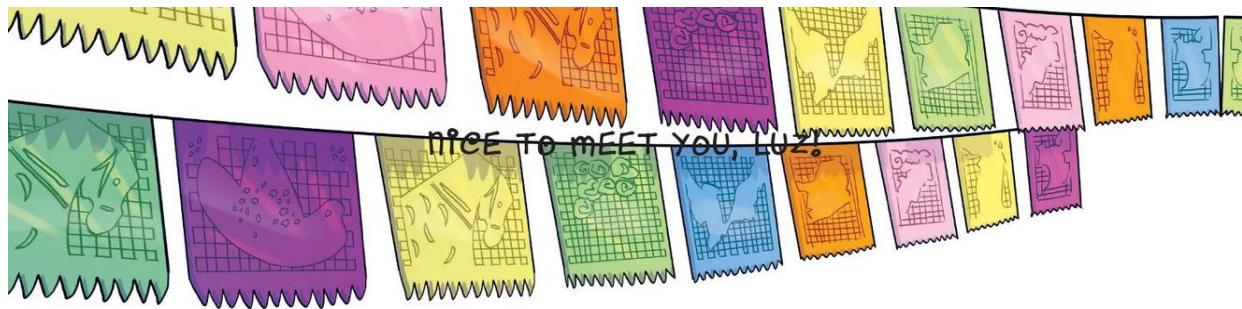
“What a pleasure to meet all of you!” Luz said once she had been introduced to the Thea Sisters. “These past few days, Blanca and Mateo have sent me a ton of messages telling me about these **AMAZING** mice they met at the reserve!”

The group **headed** toward a block-long

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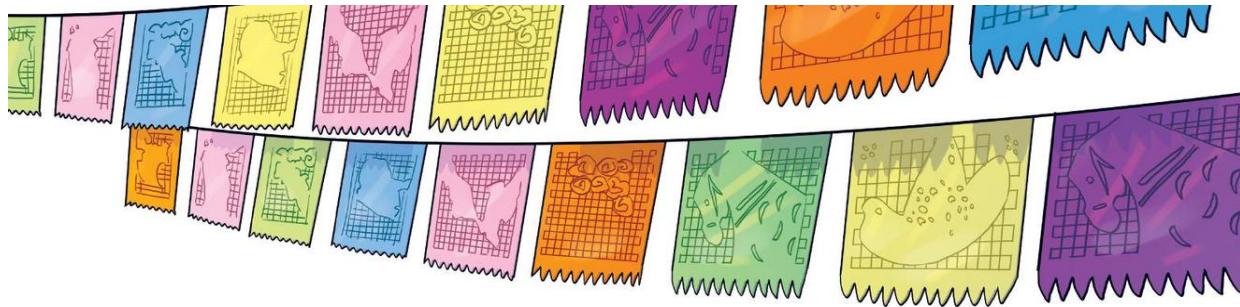
building with a sign outside that read **MERCADO SAN CAMILITO**.

Inside they found more mariachi groups, **COLORFUL** garlands hanging from the ceiling, and dozens of food stalls selling traditional Mexican foods.

“**OH, WOW!**” Pamela exclaimed. “How will I ever decide what to try? I know: I’ll close my eyes and follow the **scent** I like the most!”



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Blanca, Luz, and Mateo just laughed.

“Then we’ll let you lead the way!” Mateo said.

Pamela led the group to a vendor who served stuffed corn tortillas called **enchiladas**. They all sat down to enjoy their food while getting to know Luz better.

“Blanca and Mateo told us you’re the one who painted the beautiful butterflies on their van,” Paulina said to Luz. “You’re really talented!”

“Thank you,” Luz replied, smiling. “When we decided to decorate the van, I had no doubt about what I wanted to paint: You could say that **monarch butterflies** are the symbol of our friendship!”

The three friends explained that years earlier



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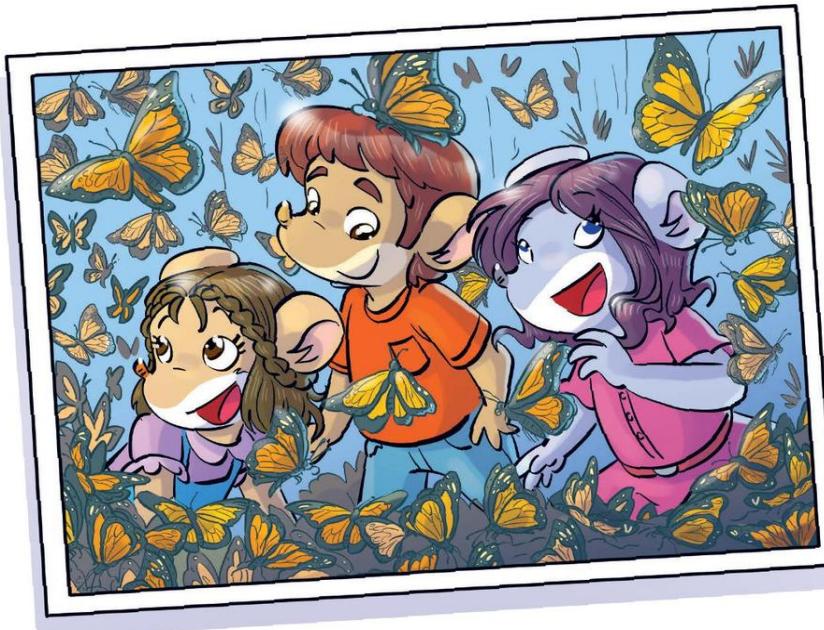


NICE TO MEET YOU, LUZ!

they had met at the **Monarch Butterfly Biosphere Reserve**.

“We were kids, and we had each gone there on trips with our families,” Blanca explained. “The three of us found ourselves standing there side by side as we listened to the tale of the monarchs’ migration.”

“The story of the long **JOURNEY** of the butterflies captured my **heart**,” Luz said dreamily. “It’s incredible that they can travel so far — to a place they’ve never been —



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NICE TO MEET YOU, LUZ!

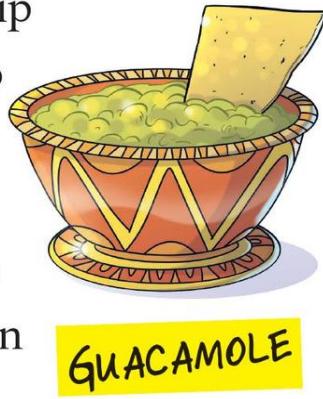


guided only by **INSTINCT**. And then they return home months later!"

"That's when we became **friends**," Mateo added. "We discovered that we were all from the same city, and we started to hang out. But each time we have the chance, we return to the reserve. Blanca and I have become more and more interested in studying butterflies, while Luz loves **drawing** them!"

"What a **beautiful** story," Pamela said as she took a corn chip and dunked it in a spicy avocado dip called *guacamole*.*

"So, Luz is the artist, while Blanca and Mateo are the scientists," Colette observed in **admiration**.



"Luz is an artist *and* an expert in the **wonders** of Mexico City!" Blanca clarified.

* *Guacamole* is a Mexican dish made of mashed avocado with chopped onion, tomatoes, chili peppers, and seasoning.

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NICE TO MEET YOU, LUZ!

“You two know the city really well, too,” Luz replied, **SMILING**.

“Of course we do,” Mateo said, chuckling. “But that’s because we never miss any of your **fascinating** tours!”



“Tours?” Violet asked, curious. The Thea Sisters discovered that Luz **loved** history as well as art, and she especially enjoyed sharing the wonders of her hometown with others. Because of this, Luz was a volunteer guide through her school. She and the other members of her group offered walking tours of the most **picturesque** parts of Mexico City.

“There’s nothing I like more than a long walk around an **EXCITING** new city!” Nicky exclaimed. “I would love to go on one of your tours.”

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NICE TO MEET YOU, LUZ!



“Me, too,” Colette agreed. “That would be incredimouse. Is there any chance you’re leading a tour that we could join **tomorrow?**”

“No, I’m sorry,” Luz said, **disappointed**. “I have other plans tomorrow.”

Then she broke into a grin. “I’m just kidding!” she squeaked, laughing. “Tomorrow I’ll be the guide on a very special private tour around the city, just for the **FIVE OF YOU!**”



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LET THE TOUR BEGIN!

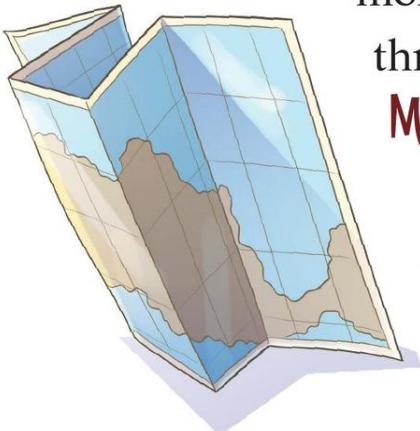
The next morning, Luz, Blanca, Mateo, and the Thea Sisters gathered outside in front of Blanca's house.

“Are you ready?” Luz asked.

“We sure are!” Pam responded. “We loaded up on *huevos rancheros** at breakfast, and we all have our walking shoes on. **Let’s go!**”

The itinerary Luz had planned for the morning would lead the group through the historic center of **Mexico City**.

Their first stop was the Palacio de Bellas Artes, the city’s famous concert hall and arts center.



* *Huevos rancheros* is a Mexican breakfast of fried eggs served on tortillas and topped with a *salsa fresca* of tomatoes, peppers, onions, and cilantro.

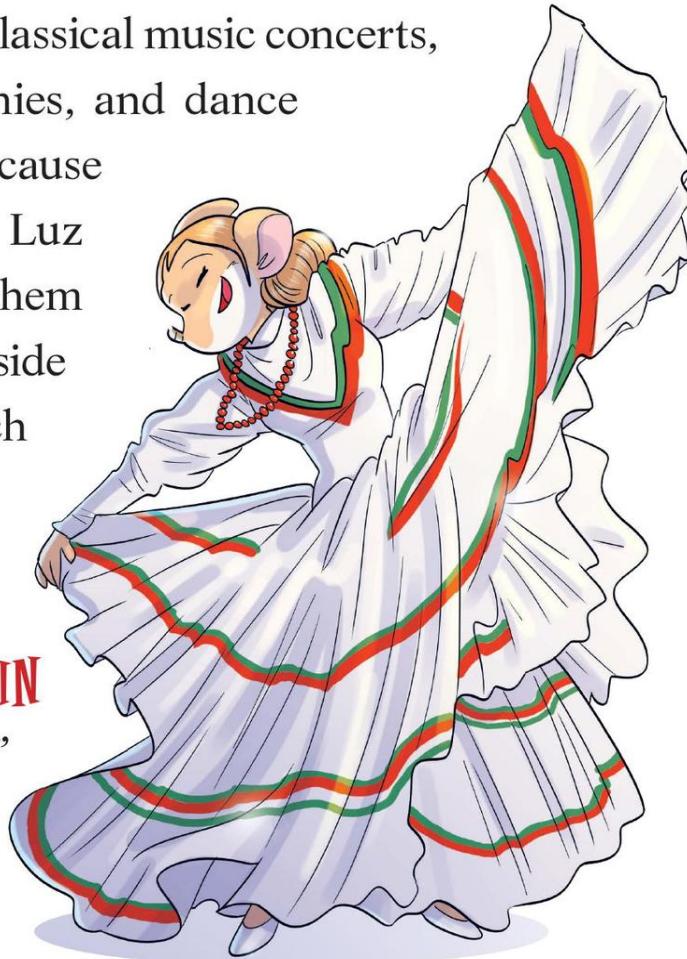
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LET THE TOUR BEGIN!



Luz led the Thea Sisters inside, where they admired **COLORFUL** *murales* — murals by the famous Mexican painters Diego Rivera and David Alfaro Siqueiros. She explained that the **elegant** white building housed the **largest** theater in the country, which was a venue for classical music concerts, operas, symphonies, and dance **performances**. Because she was a guide, Luz was able to give them a **PEEK** inside the theater, which was usually only visible during shows.

“Is that **CURTAIN** made of glass?!” Paulina asked



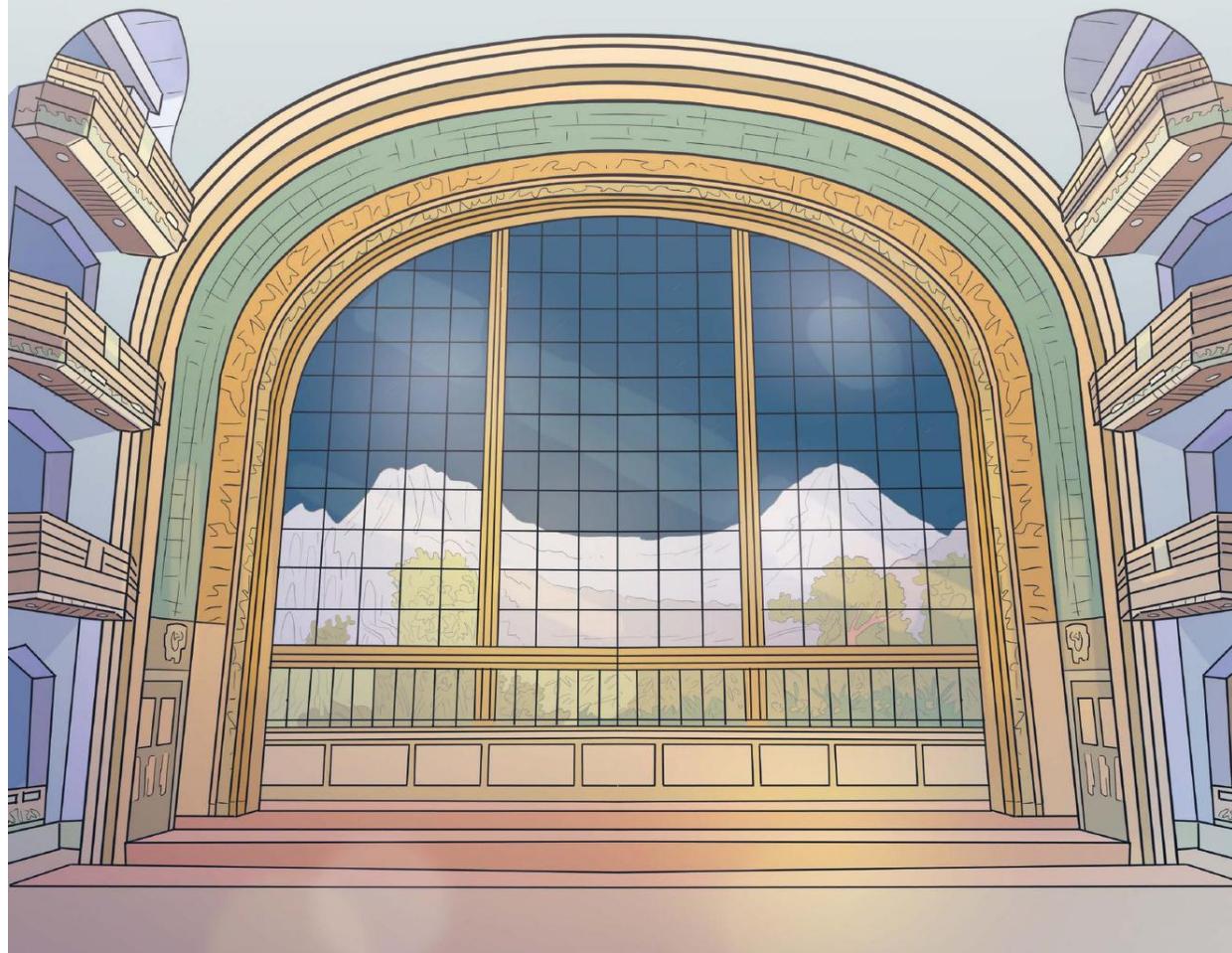
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LET THE TOUR BEGIN!

in disbelief as she took in the stage's remarkable backdrop.

"It is!" Luz replied. "The stained-glass panels were created by New York jeweler Tiffany & Co. using nearly a million pieces of colored **GLASS**!"



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LET THE TOUR BEGIN!



“The glass mosaic depicts a landscape of the Valley of Mexico,” Mateo added. “In the center you can see the **Popocatépetl** and **Iztaccíhuatl** volcanoes.”

“With a backdrop like this, you almost don’t need any **shows!**” Nicky remarked.

“It’s true!” Luz agreed as they left the theater. “And now on to the **second stop** on our tour — the skyscraper Torre Latinoamericana, or Latin American Tower!”

They rode the elevator to the forty-fourth floor of the building, where the observation deck offered panoramic views of the entire city.

Once they got back



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LET THE TOUR BEGIN!

down to street level, they continued their walk through the historic center until they reached the **Plaza de la Constitución**.

“This is the most important and **beloved** square in Mexico City,” Luz explained as she stood beneath the huge tricolored Mexican flag that waved from the central **FLAGPOLE**. “Locals call it El Zócalo. It’s also one of the **largest** squares in the world. And there is the Palacio Nacional — the presidential palace!”

Luz led the group inside, where they admired the **gardens** and the majestic murals that depicted the history of Mexico.

“This city is full of **art**,” Violet reflected as the group returned to El Zócalo. “It’s incredible that over the centuries artists have decorated both interior walls and the walls outside city buildings. Now locals and tourists

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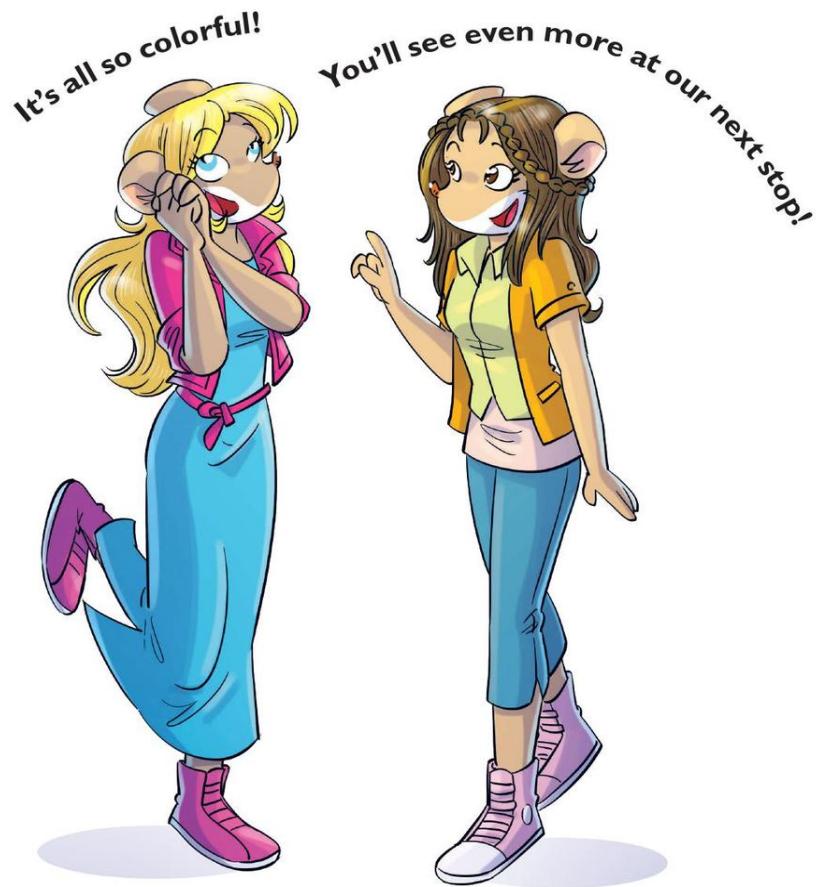
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LET THE TOUR BEGIN!

can enjoy a little bit of beauty *every day!*"

"Violet's right," Colette agreed. "Mexico City is like an **open-air painting**, and



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LET THE TOUR BEGIN!



it's the most **COLORFUL** painting I've ever seen!"

Luz's eyes lit up at Colette's words.

"I'm so **happy** you feel that way!" she gushed. "Now I can't wait to show you the next and **final stop** on our tour. It's my favorite place in the city, and it even has color in its name: **La Casa Azul!**"

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THE BLUE HOUSE

La Casa Azul means **The Blue House**, and the Thea Sisters could see why it was called that: The building was painted an electric blue both outside and in! But La Casa Azul wasn't just blue: There were touches of bright yellow, green, and red everywhere, making the place truly unique.

"This was the childhood home of the great Mexican painter **FRIDA KAHLO**," Luz explained. "She is most known for her remarkable self-portraits. This house is also where she learned to paint and produced most of her work."

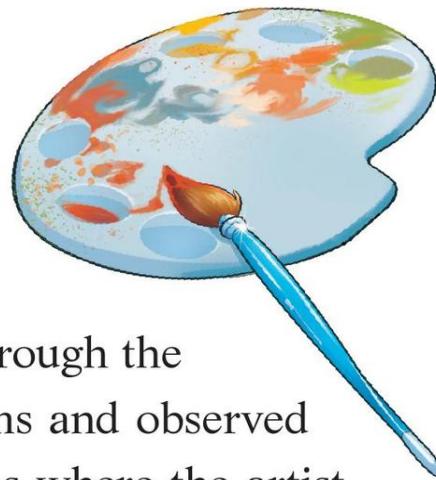
"And it was turned into a **mouseum**?" Violet asked, fascinated.

"That's right," Luz confirmed. "Today it is a mouseum where visitors can admire Frida's

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paintings and immerse themselves in the details of her everyday life.”



The group walked through the **MULTICLORED** rooms and observed each detail of the places where the artist had painted, slept, cooked, and lived. They stopped in the **kitchen**, where the yellow of the floor, the table, the chairs, and the sideboard matched the yellow details on the **blue tiles**. Then they continued into the bedroom, where **FRIDA KAHLO** spent much of her life painting from her bed after an accident left her injured and in poor health.

As they made their way through her studio, they took in the views outside the large windows. They marveled at the tidy rows of

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THE BLUE HOUSE

colorful paints, palettes, and sketchbooks that the artist had used, which had all been perfectly **preserved**. After taking in Frida's private rooms, the group moved on to a room where the painter's works were **exhibited** along with **COLORFUL** clothing that she had **loved** to wear.

"Are you okay, Colette?" Pamela asked her friend as they headed out into the gardens. "You seem a little **quiet**."

"I don't know how to explain it, but I feel so **enchanted** by Frida's world of colors!" Colette exclaimed. "She was such an inventive and original painter — it's as though the

different colors were the characters in her art.

She seemed to bring **COLOR** into every part of her life. It's



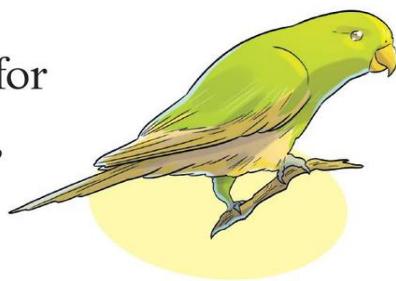
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in every detail of her house, in the beautiful clothes she wore, and in the **flowers** and **ribbons** she put in her hair. She was a **true artist!**"

After walking through the green garden, the group stopped near a fountain.

"You're right, Colette," Luz agreed. "**FRIDA** also loved animals, and she transformed this garden into a kingdom where her **four-legged** friends **ROAMED** free. Sometimes I come here and imagine her as she walked among the plants looking for **inspiration**, followed by a dog, a monkey, or a parrot!"



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“You really **admire** her, don’t you?” Nicky asked Luz.

“She’s much more than an admirer,” Blanca said. “Why don’t you tell the Thea Sisters about your project, Luz?”

Colette’s ears perked up. “**A project about Frida Kahlo?**” she asked.

Luz quickly filled in her friends. She explained that she was participating in a show dedicated to Mexican **art** and culture that was being organized by the art history program at her school. Every student that participated must design an area inside the big pavilion. They each had to pick a **theme**, and Luz decided she would use her favorite artist as inspiration.

“I chose **FRIDA KAHLO**,” Luz explained. “The show will be open to the public in a few days, and I’m working on the

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THE BLUE HOUSE

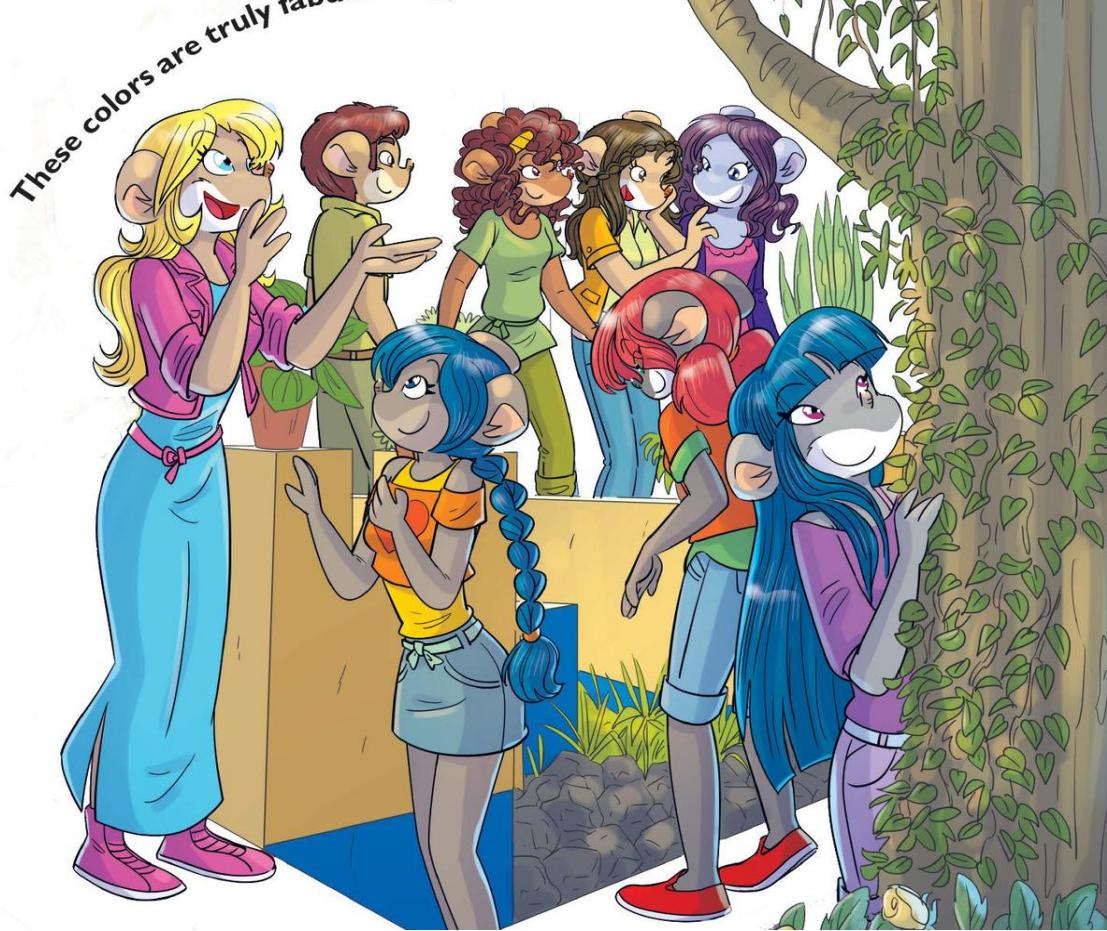


final **details** now.

I hope it goes well!"

"Of course it will go well," Blanca assured her friend. "You've worked so hard and you are so

These colors are truly fabumouse!



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talented. I'm sure the selection committee will notice!"

"There's a competition tied to the show," Mateo explained. "The student with the **BEST PROJECT** will win a scholarship to study abroad for a year."

"**Wow!**" Paulina exclaimed. "That would be incredimouse. You would learn so much."

"I can't wait for the opening to **see** what you created," Colette added.

"Actually, you can see it whenever you'd like," Luz said. "I'm still working on the finishing touches, but I would be **happy** to give you a preview. **What do you say?**"

"Yes!" the Thea Sisters squeaked at once.

"We would love that," Violet said.

"I can't wait to see your project, Luz," Colette added. "I just know it will fill my soul with many **HAPPY COLORS!**"

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THE COMPETITION HEATS UP

The next day, the Thea Sisters, Blanca, and Mateo had a plan to meet Luz to get a sneak peek at her **FRIDA KAHLO** project. Blanca and the Thea Sisters arrived right on time at the entrance to the exhibition pavilion. **Luz** was waiting there happily for them.

“Good morning!” she greeted everyone. “I can’t wait to **show you** everything. Let’s head inside!”

“Shouldn’t we wait for Mateo?” Nicky asked.

“Mateo got here a few minutes ago,” Luz replied as she headed into the pavilion. “He offered to bring some of my canvases inside. He’ll meet us at my **stand**.”

The Thea Sisters entered the enormous room where the show would take place.

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THE COMPETITION HEATS UP

They walked past a number of students who were **working** hard on their pieces. One stand in particular caught Colette's eye.

"Oh, wow!" Colette exclaimed. "**Look at this!**"

She had stopped in front of a mannequin **displaying** a beautiful multicolored dress. Luz smiled.

Good morning!



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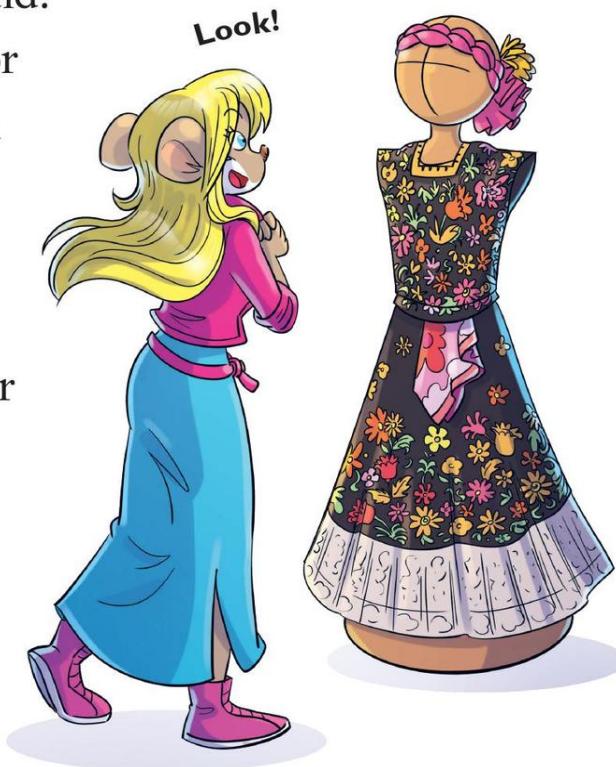
“This project is dedicated to the traditional embroidered *clothing* Mexico is known for,” she explained. “This is **Susana’s** stand. She’s my classmate and a volunteer tour guide, like me.”

Just then a mouse with a not-so-friendly smile approached them.

“Hi, Luz,” she said.
“Are you looking for
ideas to **steal** from
your classmates?”

Luz smiled.
“Umm, this is
Susana, the creator
of this beautiful
project on *Mexican
fashion*,” Luz told
the Thea Sisters.

“So nice to meet



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you, Susana,” Colette said quickly so Luz would feel less embarrassed by her classmate’s **rude** greeting. “And compliments on such an original idea. I love fashion and I think it’s amazing that someone included it among the other **art** forms!”

“Well, thank you,” Susana replied proudly. Then she turned to Luz. “**See?** That’s why I’m going to win the scholarship. After all, my idea is the **most original!**”

“Oh, we really have to go now!” Blanca cut in, dragging Luz and the Thea Sisters away before the situation got any **worse**.

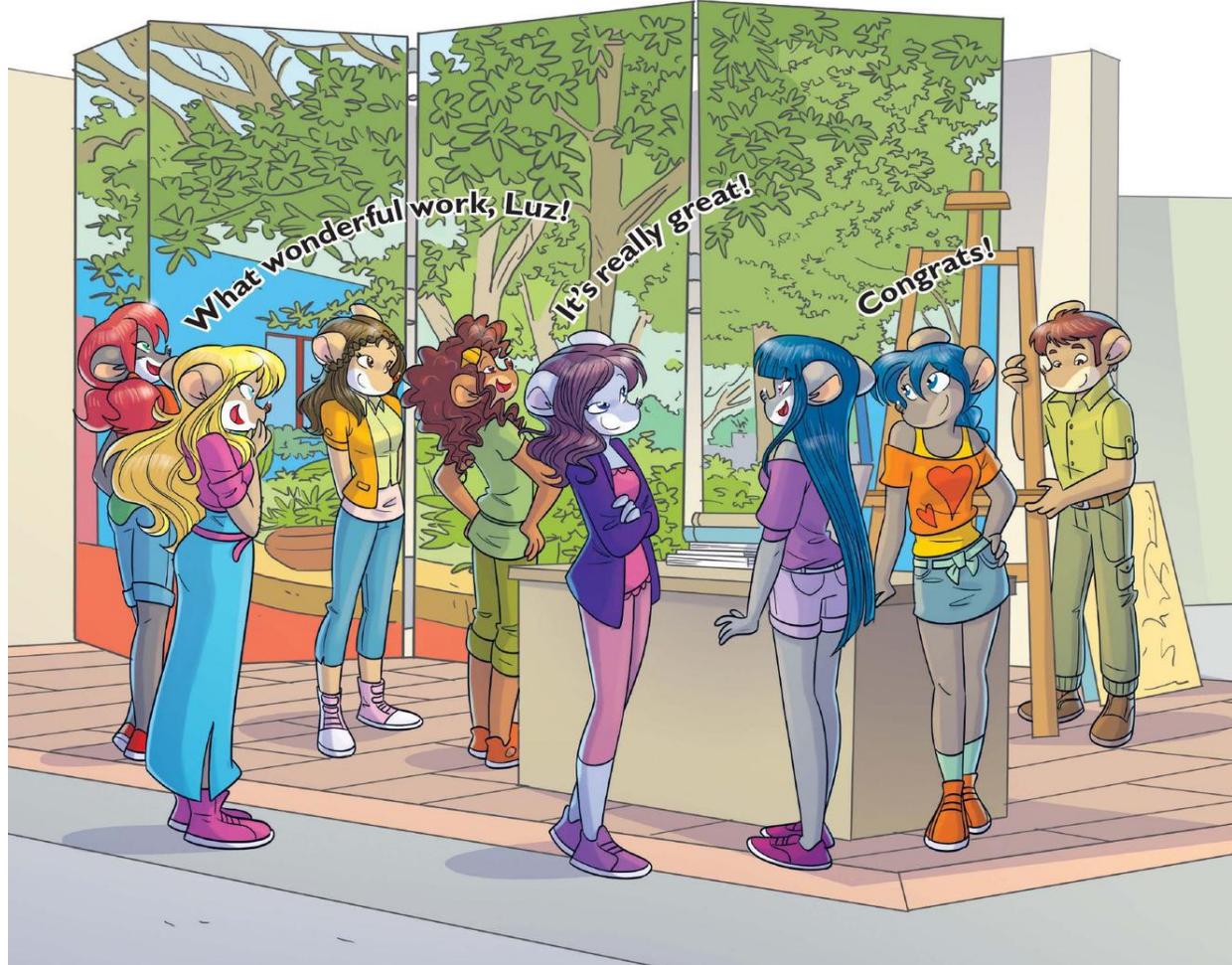
“Someone should explain to **Susana** that she’s not being a good sport at all!” Nicky remarked as soon as they had gotten **far enough** away.

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“I know, she is always so rude,” Luz said with a sigh. “Don’t pay her any attention.”

“I think I **spotted** your project, Luz!” Pamela exclaimed suddenly, pointing straight ahead. “That’s the garden from **La Casa Azul!**”



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THE COMPETITION HEATS UP

The mouselets gathered around the beautiful backdrop for Luz's **project**. They admired the large painting, which was spread over four panels and was an exact depiction of the garden at **FRIDA KAHLO'S** Casa Azul.

"Did you paint the entire thing yourself?" Violet asked, stunned. "It's **spectacular!**"

Luz just nodded and smiled **SHYLY**.

"Great work assembling these panels, too," Pamela remarked. "It's very **WELL DONE!**"

"It was **EASIER** to transport it that way," Luz said. Then she explained the finishing touches she still had to add to the piece. "I'm planning to put some live **plants** in front of the background to better re-create the garden environment. The rest of the space will be full of easels, where I'll display **paintings** that tell the story of Frida Kahlo's life using photos and text."

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THE COMPETITION HEATS UP



“I’m sorry to interrupt, Luz, but there’s something over here you should see,” Pamela said. “Something isn’t quite right here . . .”

Luz **hurried** over.

“What is it?” she asked, a worried look on her snout.

“It looks like this panel is about to come off,” Pamela explained as she showed Luz one



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THE COMPETITION HEATS UP

of the panels, which was leaning at an **odd** angle and looked like it might fall.

“Pam’s right,” Paulina agreed as she stepped forward to examine the mechanism that held the panels together. “The screw is missing from this **hinge**.”

“It’s a good thing you noticed!” Luz said as she dug up another screw from a box of tools. “If this panel had fallen, it would have knocked over all the others. That would have been a real **disaster**!”

“I wonder what happened,” Blanca said, confused. “The screw couldn’t have **FALLEN OUT** on its own!”

“That’s true,” Luz agreed slowly. “I really don’t know what **HAPPENED**. I was sure I tightened it correctly, but maybe not. Or the screw may have come **LOOSE** when I moved the panels.”

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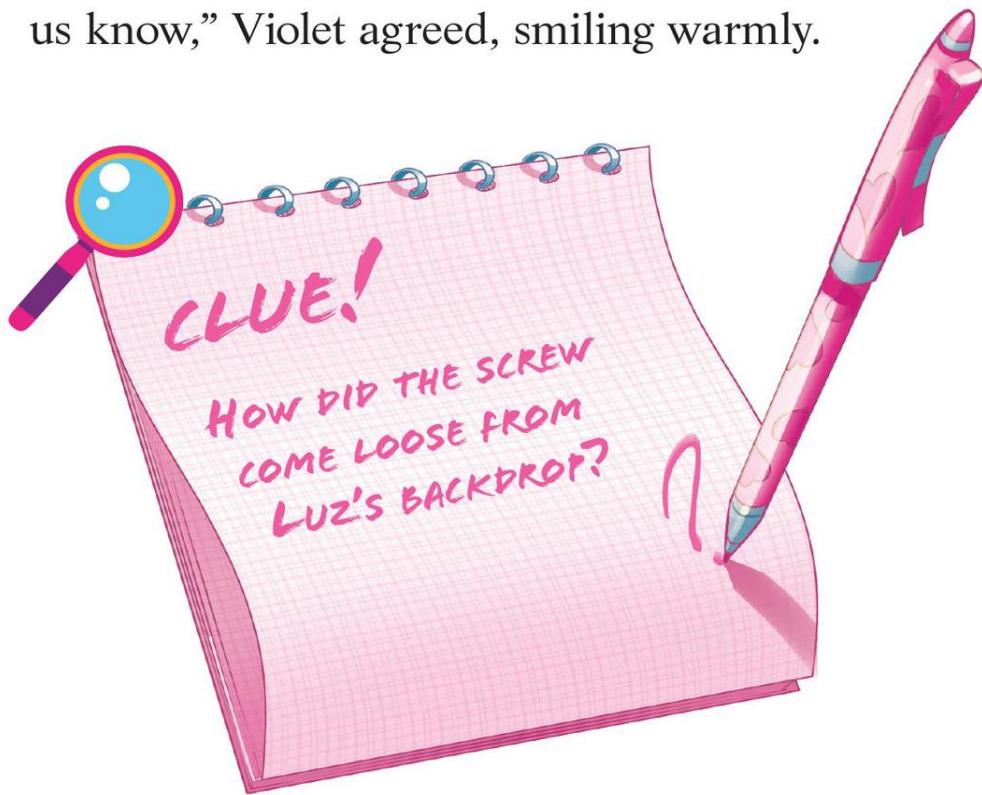


“That would be odd, but not **IMPOSSIBLE**,” Mateo said.

“True,” Luz said as she placed the new screw in the hinge. “I’ll be sure to pay close **ATTENTION** to what I’m doing!”

“And we’re here if you **need** us,” Paulina offered helpfully.

“Yes, if there’s anything we can do, just let us know,” Violet agreed, smiling warmly.



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A FOREST in THE CITY

The Thea Sisters still had a few days to enjoy Mexico City before **Dr. Meyer's** conference began. They took full advantage of having **new friends** as their tour guides.

“Today I’ll take you all for a walk in the woods!” Blanca announced at breakfast.

“That sounds fabumouse,” Nicky agreed. “I’m always eager to explore nature. Will it take a long time to get there?”

“Not at all,” Blanca replied, smiling. “The **Bosque de Chapultepec** — or **Chapultepec Forest** — is right here. It’s a really unique forest in the middle of Mexico City!”

“Great!” Colette said eagerly. “Will **Mateo** and **LUZ** be coming with us?”

“Mateo, yes,” Blanca replied. “And Luz will

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meet up with us when she is done working on her **PROJECT**.”

A short while later, everyone was ready to head out to explore the beautiful Chapultepec Forest — the enormous **GREEN HEART** of Mexico City.

“What time did you say Luz would meet us?” Violet asked as the group wound their way among the **cacti** in the park’s botanic garden.

Blanca glanced at the time on her phone. “Actually, she should be here already,” she replied. A second later, her phone **RANG**. “Oh, that’s her now! Maybe she is looking for us.”

But as the Thea Sisters watched Blanca take the call, the look on Blanca’s snout changed. Something wasn’t right.

“What happened?” Colette asked once Blanca had hung up the phone.

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A FOREST in THE CITY

“Luz had a problem with her registration for the **show**,” Blanca explained. “It seems she’s **MISSING** one of the forms. If she doesn’t get the paperwork in right away, she won’t be able to **PARTICIPATE!**”

The group continued their tour of the Chapultepec Castle — an ancient building in the middle of the urban Chapultepec Forest.



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Still, they kept thinking about Luz's problem. When they stepped out onto the castle's panoramic terrace overlooking the city, Blanca's phone **RANG** once again. It was Luz, and she was at the castle! A moment later, she caught up with the group.

"So did you solve the **PROBLEM** with your registration?" Paulina asked as the mouselets settled on a stretch of lawn near the **LAKE** so they could chat while snacking on some warm *churros*.*

"I got it done just in time!" Luz said, nodding.

"I was sure that I had **filled** out that form and put it in the envelope with the others."

"You were with me and Mateo when you filled them out," Blanca

* *Churros* are long sticks of dough that are fried and dusted with cinnamon and sugar.



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A FOREST in THE CITY

reminded Luz. “And you showed us the forms and asked us to double-check that you had completed everything. **Right, Mateo?**”

Mateo swallowed a big bite of churro.

“I think so, but I’m not sure,” he replied. “I wouldn’t **worry** about it now, though. It must have been the organization that lost the form. The important thing is that everything worked out.”

“It’s too bad you missed this morning’s trip,



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though,” Nicky pointed out. She glanced at the **LAKE** and smiled. “What do you say we take a paddleboat ride?”

“That’s a great idea!” Luz squeaked, jumping to her paws **excitedly**. “Come on, let’s go!”

“I’m going to stay here,” Mateo said as the others all stood. “I’m a bit tired. But you all should go ahead! You can leave your bags here with me.”

Everyone agreed, and the mouselets waved **good-bye** to Mateo. The trip around the lake was fun and refreshing, and Luz was able to put aside thoughts about the hiccup with the registration **forms**. When they returned to shore, she was calm and collected again.

“That was such a good idea,” Luz said as she sat down on the grass. “I feel really recharged. I’ll take advantage of this energy to work on my project a bit.”

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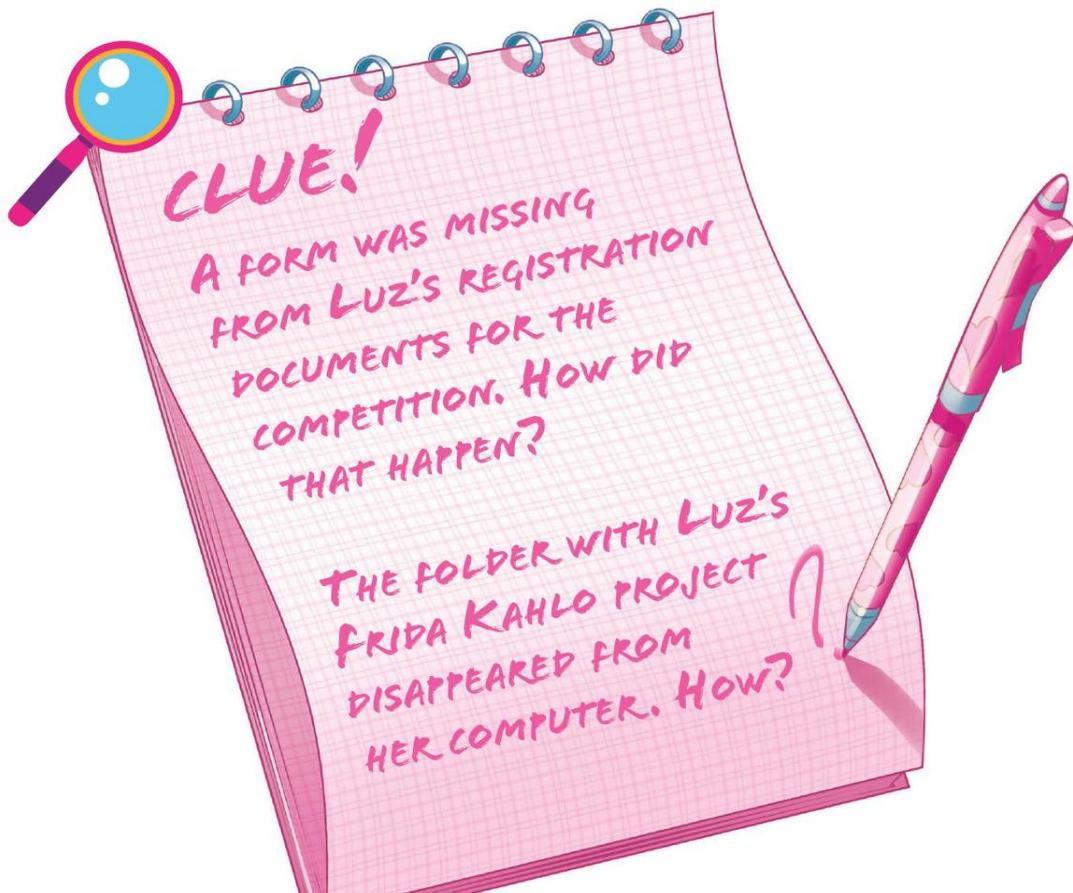
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Luz opened up her **LAPTOP** as her friends stretched out on the lawn to enjoy the last **RAY OF SUN**.

A moment later, though, Luz looked worriedly at her laptop screen.

“But that’s **not possible!**” she said. “The folder with all my material for the show **DISAPPEARED!** I lost everything!”



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THE missing FILE

After Luz realized the file was missing from her **computer**, the group quickly headed back to Blanca's house to plug in Luz's laptop and calmly assess the situation.

Luz had saved all the photos and text files that told the story of **FRIDA KAHLO'S** life in one folder on her computer. She was planning to exhibit the info on easels during the show.

“I worked on that for weeks!” Luz exclaimed as she paced back and forth while Paulina examined the laptop. “And now **everything** is gone!”

“Don’t give up **hope**,” Violet said, trying to console Luz as she passed her a cup of tea. “There must be another option.”

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Luz took a long sip.

“I’m really in **TROUBLE**,” she said. “All the material that I planned to print and exhibit at the show was in that folder!”

“You didn’t save a backup copy just to be safe?” Pamela asked.

Luz shook her head, **DISAPPOINTED**.

“Well, I did save a backup, but that was **ten days ago**,” she admitted. “I’ve made so many changes and corrections, and I’ve added a lot of photos since then, too. What do I do **now**? It would take way too long to get everything back the way it should be. I’ll have to pull out of the competition!”

“Let’s put our snouts together,” Colette said encouragingly. “I’m sure we can come up with another **solution**. What do you say, Paulina? You’re our **IT expert**. Can you think of anything we can try?”

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Paulina thought for a moment.

“Well, there is one thing,” she said. “Luz, **WHERE** was the folder?”

“It was on the desktop, and it was called *Frida*,” Luz replied. “Now it’s gone, but I know I didn’t move it. I’m always really careful about that.”

“Got it.” Paulina nodded, deep in her own thoughts. First, she **OPENED** the computer’s **trash** folder, but it was empty. Next Paulina tried to **search** to see if the folder *Frida* had ended up somewhere else accidentally, but she couldn’t find it anywhere.

Luz’s eyes filled with tears.

“I don’t believe it,” she said. “I worked so hard on this project and now **ALL MY WORK IS GONE!**”

“Wait a minute,” Paulina interjected. “That isn’t necessarily **true**. There are computer

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programs that allow you to recover deleted files. I'll install one now and see if it helps. But it will take some time for the program to **LOAD**."

The group waited patiently while Paulina installed and then ran the **RECOVERY** program. It was late in the evening when Paulina checked the **laptop** and squeaked with excitement.

"There it is!" she exclaimed. "We did it! We **RECOVERED** the folder with all your work in it, Luz!"

"You did?!" Luz gasped in surprise. Then she ran to hug Paulina. "My work is really saved?! **THANK YOU, THANK YOU!** I really don't know how to thank you!"



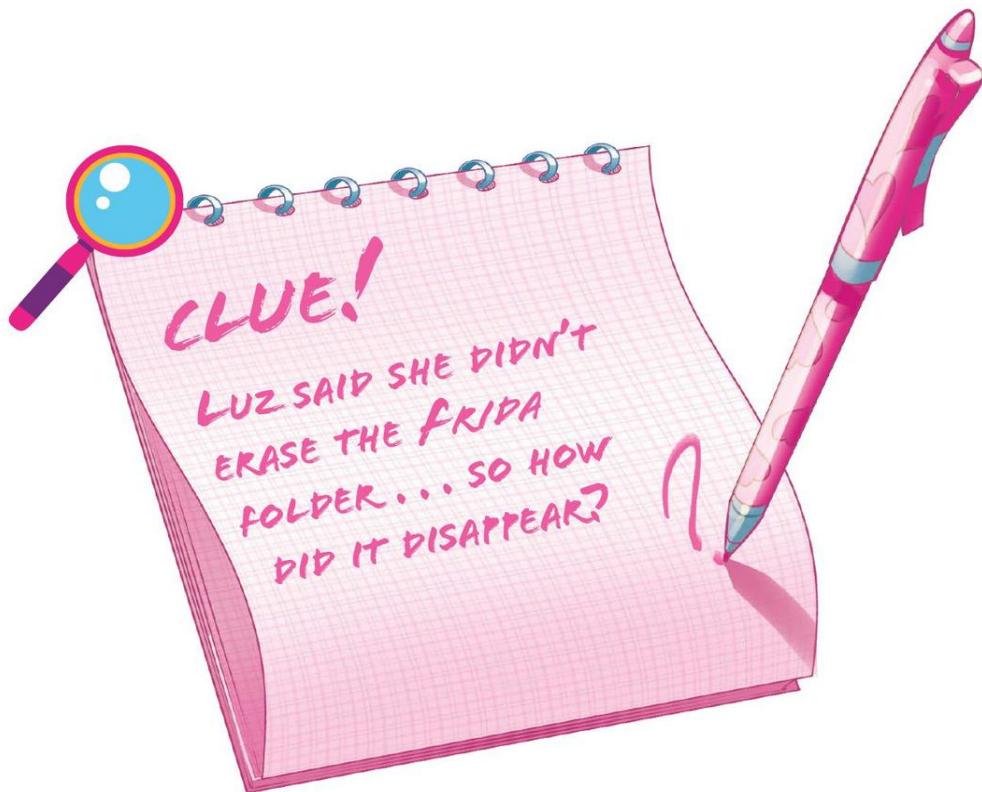
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THE MISSING FILE

Paulina just *smiled*.

“It was my pleasure. And I know what you can do for me,” she said. “Go get a good night’s rest so you’ll be well rested and in great shape for our **WALKING TOUR** tomorrow!”



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THE PYRAMID OF THE SUN

The trip planned for the following day was special because it was organized by the **WALKING TOUR** group Luz volunteered with, and it was open to a lot of tourists. It was a unique tour, too, as it included an **HOUR-LONG** bus trip to Teotihuacán, a vast archaeological site northeast of Mexico City.

“Wow!” Nicky exclaimed once they had reached their destination. “This morning we woke up in a **city of skyscrapers**, and now it’s like we’ve gone back in time!”

“I can’t wait to **explore**.” Colette smiled. “And I can’t wait to see Luz in action as an **OFFICIAL** tour guide!”

It didn’t take Colette and the other Thea Sisters long to figure out that Luz the “official

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guide” wasn’t really so **different** from the Luz who had taken the group of friends all around Mexico City. The mouselet had so much **love** for the history of her country, and she was able to convey it without being overly chatty or intrusive. Her stories were always told with care and had a unique way of sparking the imagination of the tourists who listened to them! Basically, Luz was a **terrific** guide.

Since the group was fairly large, there were two guides: **Luz** and **Susana**, whom the Thea Sisters had met at the exhibition on Mexican culture.

Unfortunately, Susana seemed more intent on taking jabs at her colleague than on guiding the tourists through the **ruins** of the city.

“Are you sure you counted the participants correctly?” Susana asked Luz.

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THE PYRAMID OF THE SUN



“Yes, of course . . .” Luz began, but Susana didn’t let her finish squeaking.

“Never mind,” she interrupted. “Just to be sure, I’ll count again.”

“I’d really like to give her a piece of my



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mind!” Pamela huffed, glaring at Susana.

“She’s very **RUDE**,” Violet agreed. “And she keeps interrupting Luz as she’s talking to the group!”

“It seems like Susana is **competing** with Luz,” Paulina observed. “It’s like she’s trying to show everyone she’s a **BETTER** guide.

“It doesn’t make sense,” Colette said, shaking her head. “They’re both on the same **team**!”

At that moment, the group reached a building with remarkable preserved walls covered in marvemouse ancient **designs**.

“Palacio de Quetzalpapálotl!” Nicky read on a sign as they walked through the building’s courtyard.

“I know it seems like a tongue twister!” Luz explained. “But it means ‘**the Palace of the Quetzal Butterfly**.’”

Then she pointed to the bas-relief that

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decorated one of the columns in the courtyard.

“It has that name because of the depictions of these **mythological animals** that are half bird and half butterfly,” Luz explained.

“**Butterflies** aren’t just a symbol of your friendship, but of our trip as well!” Paulina said as she smiled at Luz, Blanca, and Mateo.

They continued to stroll through the city’s incredible **ancient ruins** until they reached the foot of the **PYRAMID OF THE SUN**, one of the largest in the world.



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THE PYRAMID OF THE SUN

“Now this is a set of **STAIRS!**” Violet joked as she gazed at the slope to the top.

“It’s true there are a **lot** of steps,” Luz agreed. “But once you admire the view from the **top**, you’ll be glad you did it! **Are you ready?**”

“Let’s go!” the Thea Sisters squeaked enthusiastically.



The friends took it one pawstep at a time. Once they had **taken** their last step, they agreed with Luz completely: From the top, the mouselets could feel the sun’s positive **energy**!

Meanwhile, Luz showed some members of the tour group a spot at the summit.

“Legend has it that if

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you stand right here and make a *wish*, it will come true!” Luz said. Then she stepped aside and let the tourists **line up** to make their wishes.

A moment later, Susana made a snide remark under her breath, just loud enough for Luz and the Thea Sisters to hear: “I don’t think making a wish up here will help you win the competition, but you can try anyway.”

“I really don’t **UNDERSTAND** why she dislikes me,” Luz said with a sad sigh to the Thea Sisters. “I try to be **nice** to her, but it doesn’t make a difference.”

“Maybe you should just ask her,” Colette suggested.

Luz didn’t waste any time. She approached



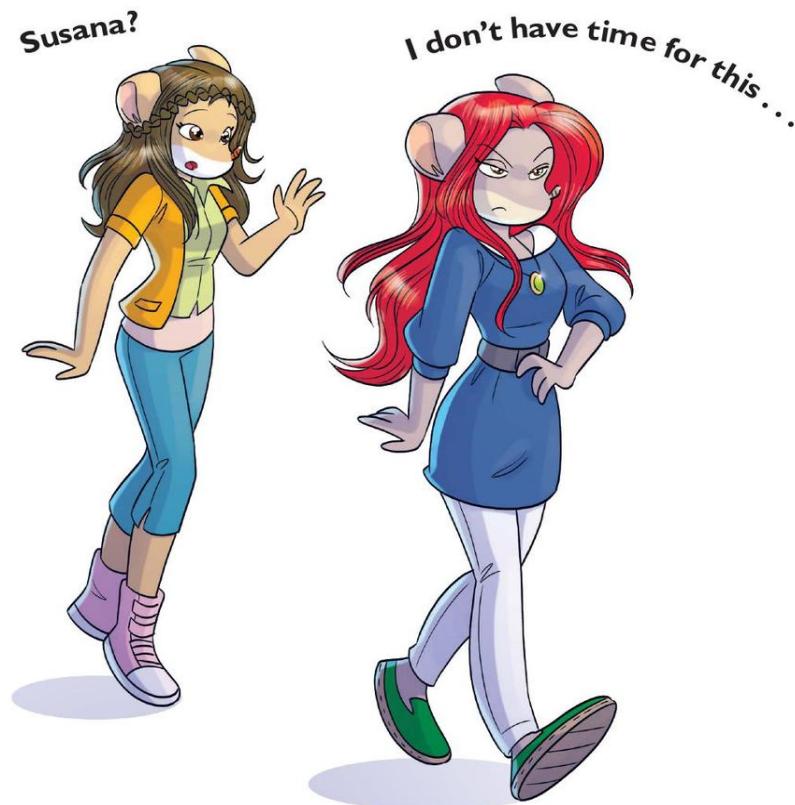
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THE PYRAMID OF THE SUN

Susana as the mouselets watched from afar. But the conversation didn't last long, as Susana quickly brushed Luz off and **scampered** away.

"So, how did it go?" Nicky asked when Luz returned.



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“You **SAW** what happened,” Luz replied, looking disappointed. “She barely let me say a word before she said I was **EXAGGERATING** and getting worked up over nothing.”

Then Luz forced a smile.

“Maybe she’s right,” she said with a shrug. “I’m better off if I don’t think about Susana. I should concentrate on the tourists instead!”

The Thea Sisters watched their friend as she guided the group down the pyramid steps: Luz’s attempt to **clear the air** with Susana hadn’t worked, which meant nothing about the rude mouselet’s behavior would change!

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PREPARING WITH THE PROFESSOR

Dr. Meyer called on the evening of the trip to the Teotihuacán archaeological site. The Thea Sisters had returned to Blanca's house and were preparing to sit down to a well-deserved **dinner** after their long day of sightseeing. They were all looking forward to sneaking in a nap once they were full.



“Hello, Paulina,” Dr. Meyer said. “The monarch migration **conference** begins in a few days! I would like to **MEET WITH YOU** so we can talk about our presentation and make a plan. Can you and the other Thea Sisters meet

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PREPARING WITH THE PROFESSOR



me tomorrow at the university convention hall?”

“Of course, Dr. Meyer!” Paulina responded **happily**. “It would be our pleasure!”



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“Excellent,” Dr. Meyer replied. “This way you can **see** the room where the conference will take place, and you can practice using the equipment as well.”

“That sounds **perfect**,” Paulina agreed. “And thank you again for the opportunity!”

The next day, the Thea Sisters showed up promptly for their *meeting* with Dr. Meyer at the convention hall.

“Welcome!” the entomologist greeted them warmly. “So what do you think?” She gestured at the room.

“It’s a nice room,” Colette observed. “And it’s really **big**. Do you expect it to be full?”

“I think so,” Dr. Meyer replied. “All the **RESEARCHERS** we invited confirmed their attendance, and the conference is open to the public as well.”

“Oh!” Paulina exclaimed *nervously*. “I

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PREPARING WITH THE PROFESSOR

hope my **photos** are interesting enough.”

“Your photos will be a big hit,” Dr. Meyer said reassuringly. “Everyone who sees them will feel like they’ve been **transported** to the reserve. They are the perfect addition to my research. Come, I’ll show you around and introduce you to the assistants who will help during the **presentation**.”

While the Thea Sisters followed the entomologist, Nicky’s phone **buzzed**. But Nicky thought it would be rude to answer while the professor was showing her and her friends around.

So she left her phone in her pocket.



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Once Dr. Meyer had introduced Paulina to everyone, the mouselet felt a bit more at ease.

“Well, now I just have to forget that experts who have studied **monarch butterflies** for years will be listening, and then I’ll be ready to speak at the conference!” she **JOKED**.

“Don’t worry, you’ll be great,” Dr. Meyer reassured her. “I wouldn’t have asked you to accompany me if I wasn’t sure you could do it.”

Then the entomologist said good-bye and the Thea Sisters left the conference hall.

“What should we do now?” Pamela wondered. “Should we call Luz, Mateo, and Blanca and **Meet up** with them?”

“Oh, that reminds me that I should check my phone!” Nicky said as she pulled it out and looked at the screen. “It rang while we were

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PREPARING WITH THE PROFESSOR

with Dr. Meyer.”

“What is it?” Violet asked, noticing the **worried** expression on her friend’s snout.

“I don’t know,” Nicky replied. “But judging from that message, it’s nothing good!”



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IS IT JUST A COINCIDENCE?

After reading the message from Luz, the others agreed with Nicky: Something was definitely **WRONG**!

“I wonder what happened,” Violet remarked.

“There’s **no way** to know,” Colette said. “But one thing is certain: **OUR FRIEND NEEDS US!**”

Without wasting a moment, the mouselets headed to the exhibition pavilion and went straight to the stand dedicated to Frida Kahlo. Once they arrived, there was no need for an **explanation**. One look was enough.

“Oh no!” Colette gasped. “What happened to the backdrop you **PAINTED**?”

“I don’t know,” Luz replied in disbelief, her eyes full of tears. “I don’t know what else to

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say. It was here when I left two days ago, and now it's gone!"

Luz explained that she had arrived at the exhibition hall that morning to work on her **PROJECT**, but when she got there, the panels she had painted with scenes from the garden of **La Casa Azul** weren't where they should have been! After asking around the exhibition hall to see if anyone had seen the panels, Luz had **TEXTED** her friends for help. Blanca had arrived a few minutes later, followed by Mateo and finally by the Thea Sisters.

"This is just one **mess** after another." Luz sighed. "Up until now, everything can be explained by my **lack of attention**. But this time I know I didn't make a mistake!"

"Actually, I don't think you did anything wrong the other times, either, Luz," Paulina said thoughtfully.

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“So you think someone is **sabotaging** Luz’s work on purpose?!” Blanca asked, stunned.

“If just one of these strange **incidents** had occurred, it might be a coincidence,” Nicky reflected. “But too many things have happened.”

“That’s true,” Pamela agreed. “The background **PANELS** couldn’t have disappeared on their own.”

“Exactly,” Pam replied, nodding. “**Someone** is behind all of this, I’m sure of it!”

“Well, if that’s



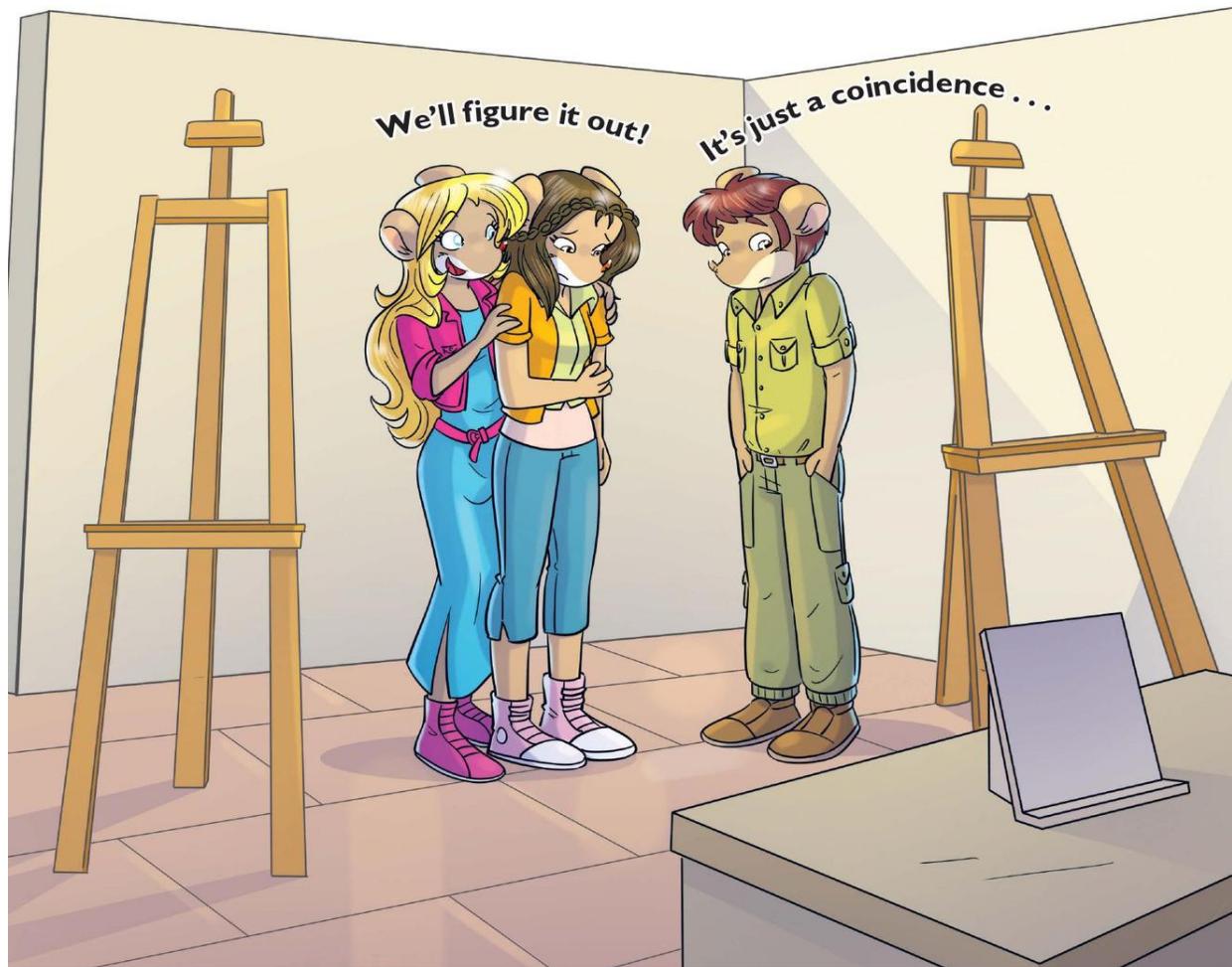
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IS IT JUST A COINCIDENCE?

the case, the saboteur has succeeded,” Luz said, sighing bitterly. “It took me months to **paint** that backdrop. I’ll never be able to do it again in time for the opening of the **EXHIBITION!**”

“But maybe it is all just a coincidence,”



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IS IT JUST A COINCIDENCE?



Mateo cut in. “It’s possible the backdrop was **moved** by mistake.”

“Yes, it’s possible,” Violet said. “We don’t have proof one way or the other right now, but I know we’ll figure out what happened.”

Colette put her arm around Luz.

“We **promise** we’ll help sort it out,” Colette said reassuringly. “We’ll **FIND** your panels so you can take part in the show!”



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WHAT'S THE PLAN?

The Thea Sisters knew they had to get to the bottom of the mystery of Luz's disappearing **PANELS**. But they weren't sure how. **They needed a plan!** So the five Mouseford students left the exhibition hall and found a café with some outdoor tables where they could regroup.

"Let's **EXAMINE** all the information we have," Paulina said. Then she pulled out a piece of paper with some notes **WRITTEN** on it.

"Let's go in order," Colette began as she sipped a strawberry *agua fresca*.* "First the hinge came loose from one of Luz's panels. We know Luz assembled the panels in her **exhibition space**, so if someone pulled the screw out on purpose in the hopes that

* *Agua fresca* is a refreshing drink made with fresh fruit, water, and lime.

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WHAT'S THE PLAN?



everything would **collapse**, it had to have been done right in the exhibition hall.”

“That’s true,” Violet replied, nodding. “After that there was the strange **disappearance** of one of Luz’s registration forms. But Luz



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WHAT'S THE PLAN?



said she had filled it out, and Blanca and Mateo were witnesses. The papers were definitely in Luz's backpack."

"Right," Nicky said. "Then the folder went missing from Luz's laptop. But the computer was also in Luz's backpack the entire time!"

"And now we're back to the panels, which were here two days ago and are suddenly **gone!**" Paulina concluded.

The friends reflected **Silently** as they sipped their fruity drinks.

After a few minutes, Colette finally spoke.

"It's clear that whoever is **behind** this doesn't want Luz to participate in the show, but **why?**"

"Whoever it is must not want to go up against her," Violet guessed. "Luz's work on

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Frida Kahlo is really well done, especially because of Luz's unique **artistic** touch."

"If that's why, then everyone participating in the show is a possible **SUSPECT**," Nicky pointed out.

"Well, everyone except Susana," Pam said. "She seems to be confident she's going to win. **WAIT!** What if it actually was **Susana**?"

"Maybe she isn't as **CONFIDENT** as she seems."

"Susana's work space is very close to Luz's," Violet pointed out. "She had the opportunity to **rummage** through Luz's



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WHAT'S THE PLAN?

backpack, and she could have easily gotten her paws on Luz's **PANELS** . . . ”

Colette seemed convinced. “And the panels **DISAPPEARED** right after Luz and Susana had that little disagreement during the **trip** to Teotihuacán!” she squeaked.

“Plus, Susana’s never been very nice to Luz,” Violet said. “So it wouldn’t be so **STRANGE** if she tried to sabotage her during an event as important as this competition.”

“She’s definitely our number-one suspect,” Colette concluded. “**We need to keep an eye on her!**”

At those words, Pamela suddenly jumped to her paws. “Look over there!” she cried.

The other Thea Sisters **FOLLOWED** their friend’s gaze and saw **Susana** scampering out of the exhibition hall.

“Let’s go, sisters,” Violet squeaked, a serious

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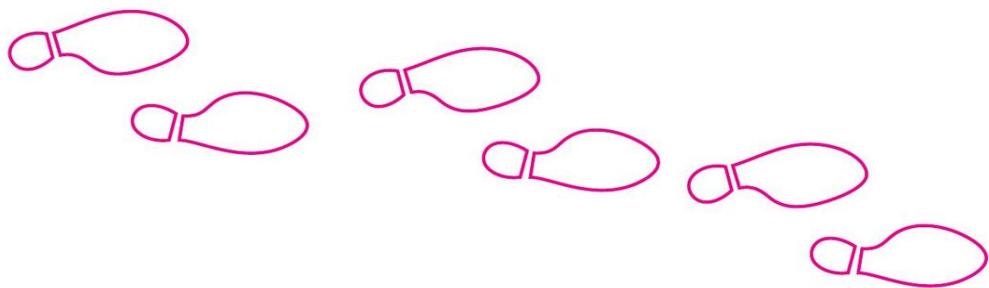


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WHAT'S THE PLAN?

expression on her snout. “We have to hurry! This is our chance to get to the bottom of this. We cannot let her get away.”



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A SHOCKING TURN OF EVENTS!

There was no time to lose: The Thea Sisters left the café and, keeping their distance, followed Susana. The mouselet walked quickly, as if she had to get somewhere **as soon as possible**.

“Look, she’s going down to the **subway**,” Pamela pointed out.

The Thea Sisters watched as Susana scampered onto the escalator that led down to the **underground** station.

The five friends



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A SHOCKING TURN OF EVENTS!

hurried after her, boarding the train at the other end of the car.

Luckily, Susana was busy **FLIPPING** through a notebook, so she didn't notice that the Thea Sisters had **followed** her.

When the train stopped at Coyoacán, Susana hopped off. The Thea Sisters followed her back up to the street as



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Susana walked quickly through an area of short, **MULTICOLORED** houses. Around them there were a few small stores selling craft items.

“I don’t know why, but there’s something familiar about this place,” Nicky said as she **looked** around her.

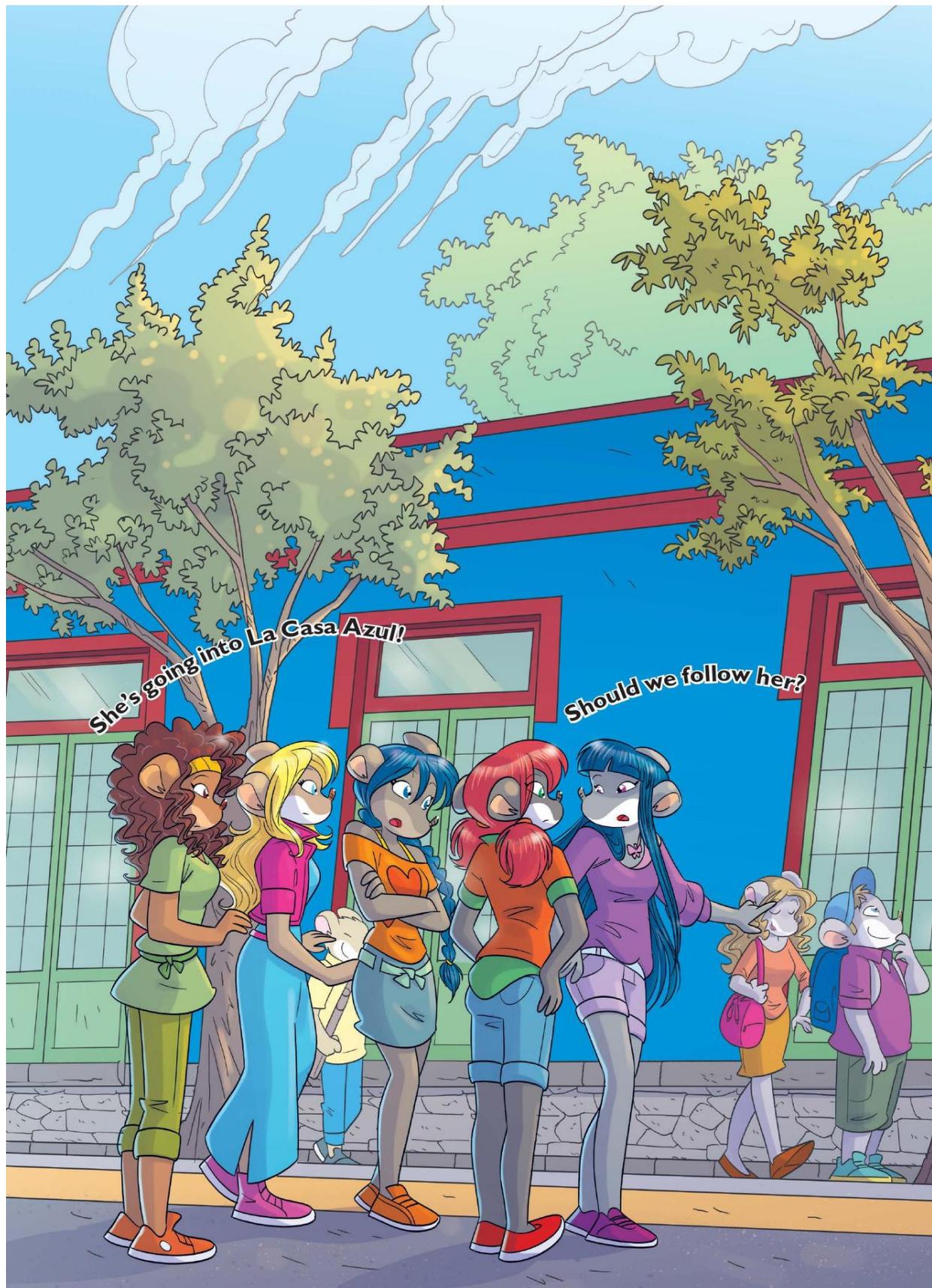
“You’re right,” Colette agreed. “I definitely feel like I’ve been here before.”

A few minutes later, the mouselets followed Susana around a corner and found themselves in front of a building with **ELECTRIC-BLUE** walls.

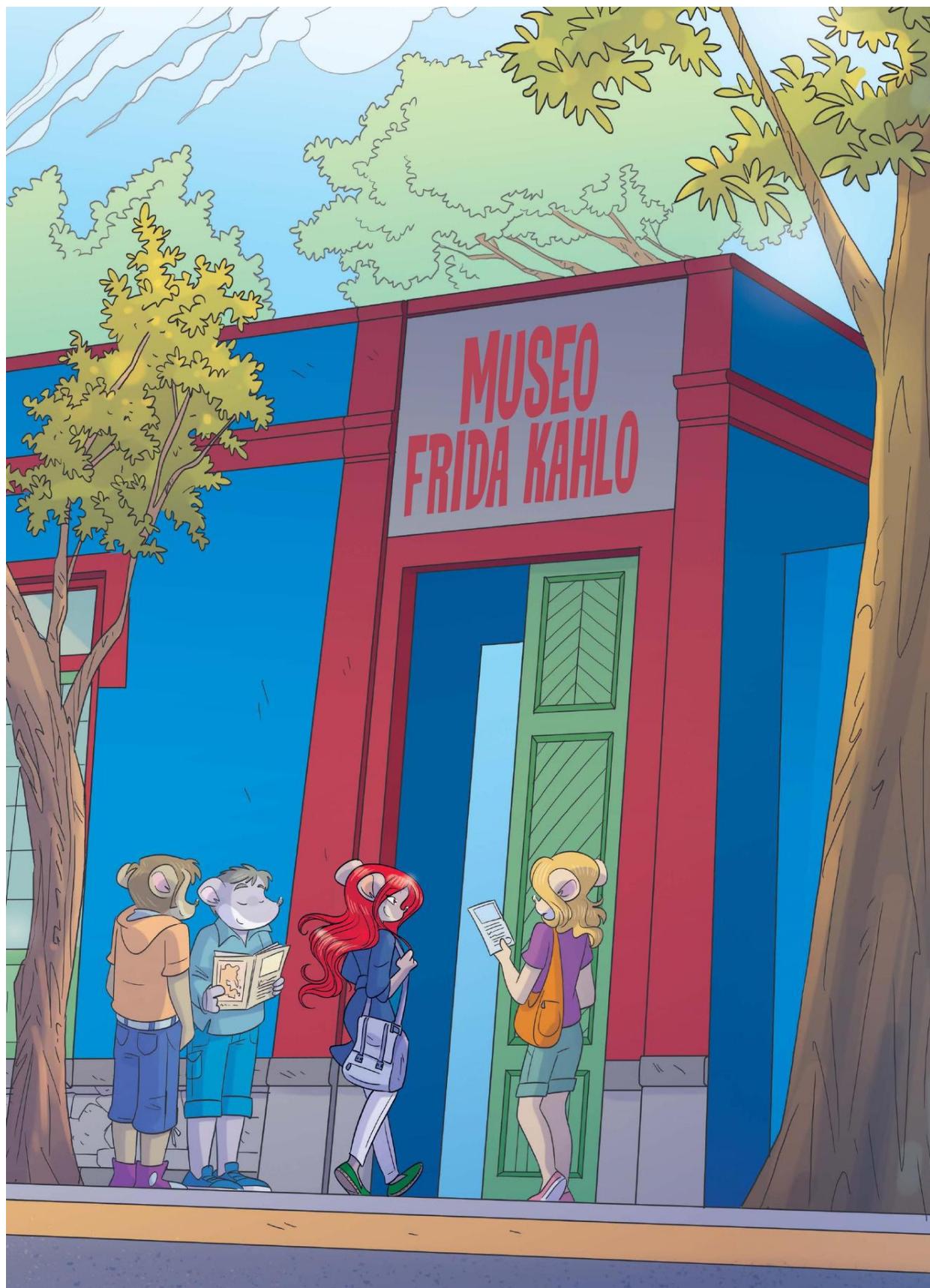
“I guess we know why you feel that way, Colette!” Paulina exclaimed. “We **HAVE** been here before.”

The five friends watched as Susana crossed the **STREET** and entered the Frida Kahlo Museum.

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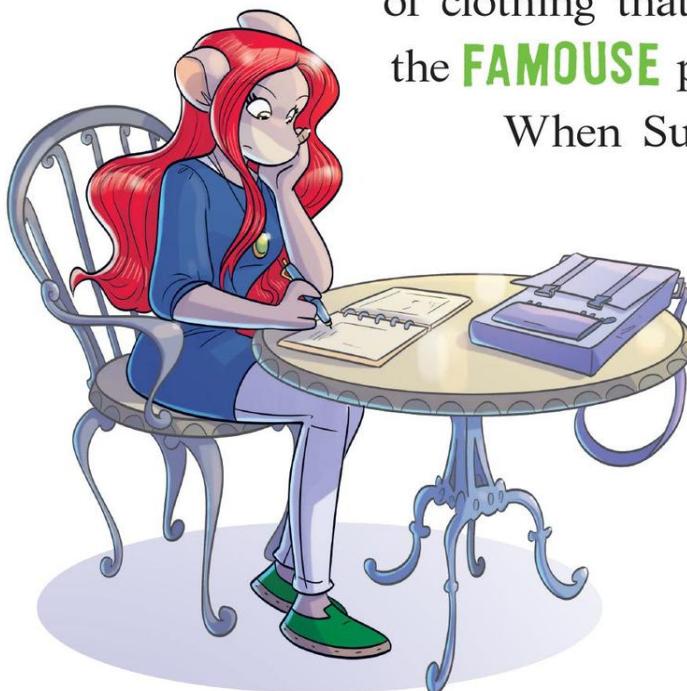


A SHOCKING TURN OF EVENTS!

“What is Susana doing at La Casa Azul?” a confused Violet asked. “Do you think it has something to do with Luz’s project?”

Pamela shrugged. “I don’t know,” she replied. “The only way to find out is to follow her inside!”

So the Thea Sisters joined a group of **tourists** visiting the mouseum and watched Susana from afar as she moved from one room to the next. She stopped to carefully study the racks of clothing that had belonged to the **FAMOUSE** painter.



When Susana reached the garden, she sat down at a small table, took out her notebook, and began to **write**.

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A SHOCKING TURN OF EVENTS!



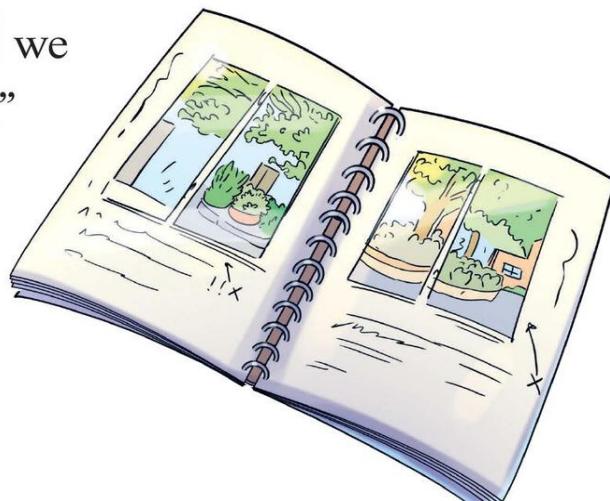
“Sisters, I’m feeling a bit **CONFUSED**,” Colette whispered to her friends, who were huddled with her behind some potted plants. “Maybe Susana is just doing research for her own project.”

A moment later, Susana put the notebook in her bag, stood up, and headed toward the exit. But Susana didn’t notice that her notebook was poking out of the bag, and it slipped out and **fell** to the ground.

“What do we do now?” Nicky asked.

“We get the notebook and give it back to her,” Paulina replied. “We can’t just **PRETEND** we didn’t see it happen.”

She scampered over and picked up the notebook. But when she saw



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A SHOCKING TURN OF EVENTS!

the contents of the pages the book was open to, she raised her eyebrows.

“**What is it?**” Pamela asked her friend.

“These are sketches of Luz’s panels!” Paulina squeaked as she showed her friends the pages.

“Give that back at once!” came a sharp voice.

The Thea Sisters were startled to look up and find an angry Susana glaring at them.

“All right, you found me out,” she **That's mine!** snapped. “What are you going to do now, tell **LUZ**?”



“So you admit that it was you?” Colette asked, confused.

“Yes, I admit that I spied on Luz’s work,” Susana squeaked, sighing. “I know I could have asked her for help, but I’m too **PROUD**. I just couldn’t do it!”

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The Thea Sisters exchanged **surprised** glances: Susana wanted to ask Luz for help? That was her **SECRET**?

“What do you say we sit down and you explain **everything**?” Violet suggested.

That’s how the Thea Sisters discovered what Susana had been up to: She wanted to use some inspiration from Frida Kahlo in her work on traditional Mexican fashion.

“Frida was a style icon, and she often wore traditional outfits,” Susana explained. “But I didn’t want to copy her famous **self-portrait** for my project: I wanted to make something really **unique** and **artistic**!”

“And since Luz is an expert on Frida Kahlo and an **artist**, you thought studying her work would help?” Colette suggested.

Susana nodded.

“I really admire Luz,” she admitted. “Maybe

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A SHOCKING TURN OF EVENTS!

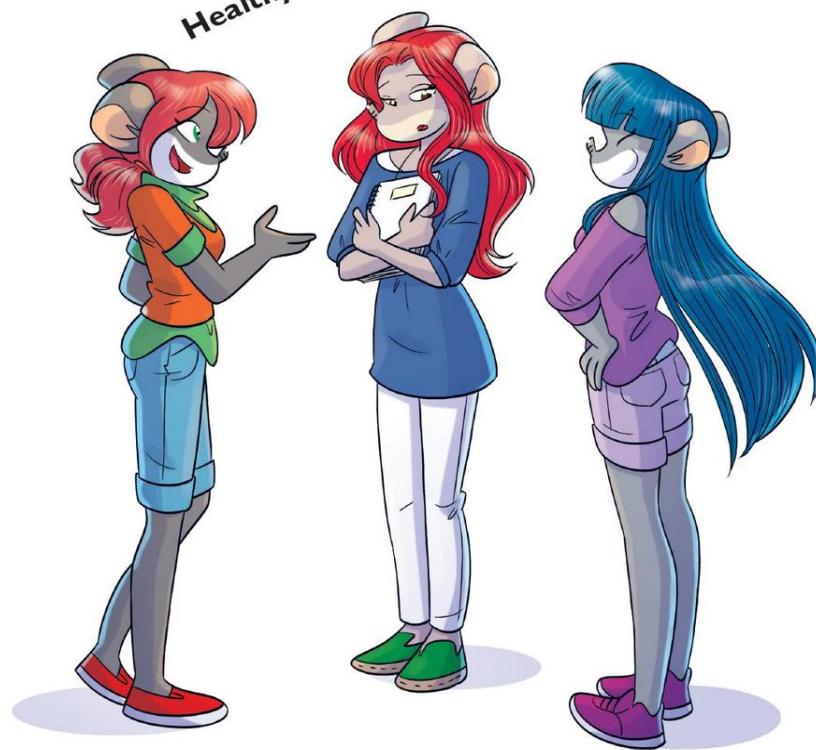
that's why I always feel like I'm competing with her."

"But that's a **good thing**!" Nicky exclaimed. "It's like in sports: Competing against those who are better than us pushes us to improve and do our **best**!"

Susana didn't look convinced.

"Yes, but each time I approach to ask her for

Healthy competition can be good!



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a suggestion, my **PRIDE** takes over and I end up being mean,” Susana explained.

“Well, that’s true,” Violet said, **SMILING**. “Your way of expressing admiration is a bit strange.”

“I think you should try again,” Nicky said encouragingly. “I’m sure Luz would like to be your friend, and I know she would be **HAPPY** to help you with your project.”

Susana thanked them, and the Thea Sisters felt both **HAPPY** and **worried**.

It was great news to learn that Susana hadn’t been trying to sabotage Luz’s project and that she and Luz still had a chance to become **friends**. But it also meant that they were no closer to figuring out who was sabotaging their friend.

They had to start their investigation all over again!

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A DISASTROUS DAY

Once the Thea Sisters realized Susana was no longer a suspect, they filled her in on what had happened. Susana was upset to learn about the **mysterious** mishaps, and she offered to help the Thea Sisters with their investigation in whatever way she could.

So while Susana **worked up** the courage to finally ask Luz for advice, the Thea Sisters found themselves in detective mode once more.

“I’m so glad Susana decided to ask Luz for help with her project,” Colette told **Blanca** and **Mateo** later that evening. “This way Luz will be busy with something else and she won’t be constantly thinking about the missing panels.”

“Yes, and in the meantime, we’ll do whatever

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we can to find them!” Pamela said. “It’s not fair that Luz might not be able to take part in the show!”

“What do you think we should do next?” Blanca asked.

“We could go back to the exhibition hall and talk to the other students,” Paulina suggested. “Maybe someone **noticed** something.”

“That’s a **GREAT** idea!” Mateo said, suddenly breaking his silence. “I’ll come by with the van first thing tomorrow and we can all go over there together!”

The next day, the **THEA SISTERS** and Blanca waited patiently in front of Blanca’s house, but there was no sign of Mateo.

“Where could he be?” Blanca wondered.

Nicky tried to call their friend, but she hung up quickly, a **disappointed** look on her snout.

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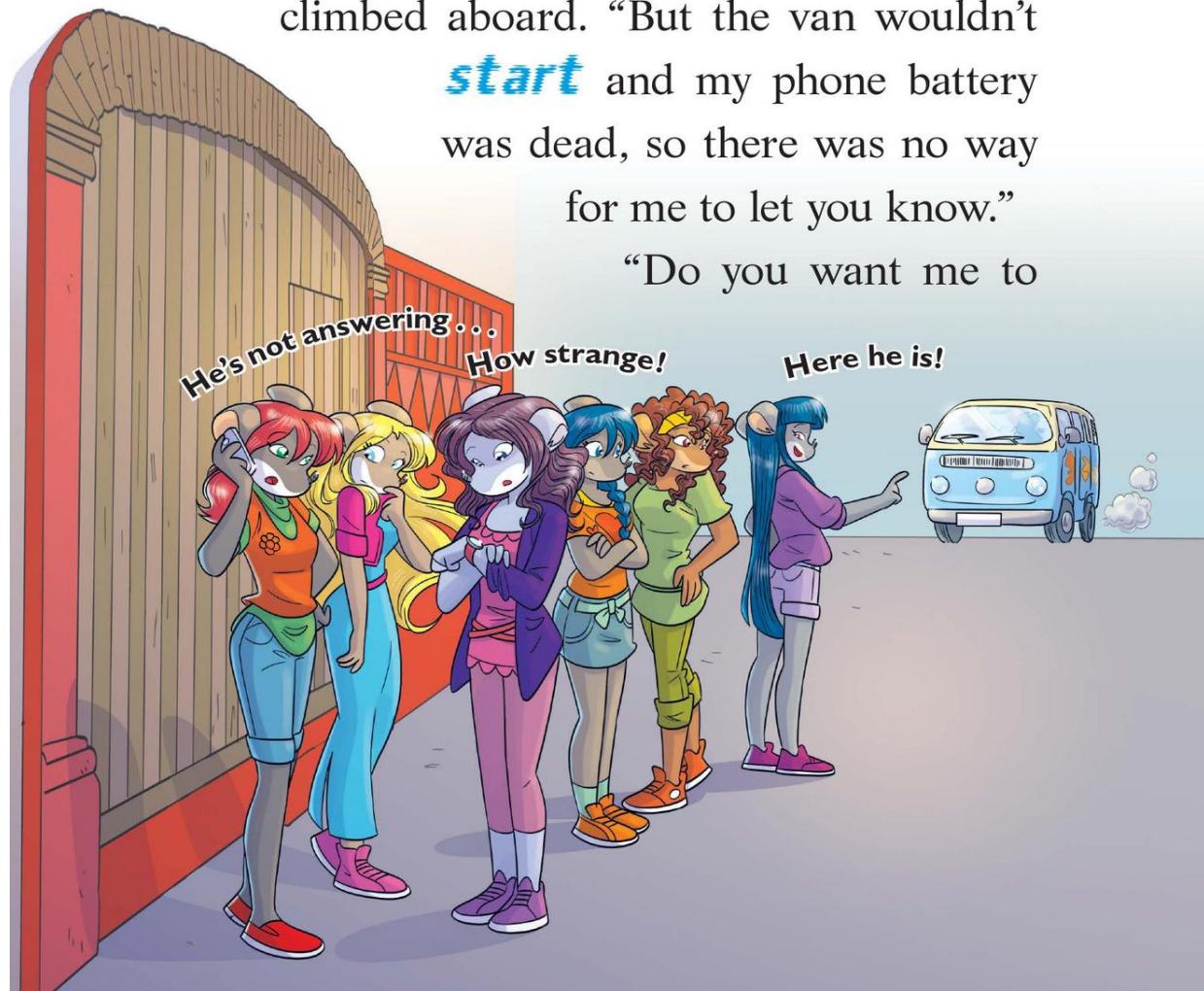
A DISASTROUS DAY

“It sounds like he’s turned off his **cell phone**.”

The group of friends waited for almost an hour. Just when they were about to give up and make their way on their own, they spotted the **MULTiCOLORED** van in the distance.

“I’m so sorry,” Mateo said as the friends climbed aboard. “But the van wouldn’t **start** and my phone battery was dead, so there was no way for me to let you know.”

“Do you want me to



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take a **LOOK** at the motor?" Pam offered. "If there's a problem, it would be better to fix it right away."

"**NO, NO!**" Mateo replied quickly. Then, seeing the **confused** look on Pamela's snout, he added, "We're already late. We better just get going."

Once everyone was in the van, Mateo pulled out into traffic and headed toward the exhibition hall. But a short time later, the van began to **sputter** and came to a stop.

"Oh no!" Colette exclaimed. "**What is it now?!** Is there a problem with the motor again?"

"No, this time it's the gas," Pam replied, pointing at the **flashing** gauge on the dashboard.

Mateo put his paw to his forehead and **GROANED**.

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A DISASTROUS DAY

“I can’t believe it,” he said. “I was so distracted with the motor problem I forgot to fill up the tank!”

“What are we going to do now?” Blanca asked, **LOOKING** around. “And why are we all the way out here, Mateo? Why didn’t you drive through the center of town? That’s the quickest way to go.”

“I wanted to avoid **TRAFFIC** since we were already late,” he said.

“Well, this is one car problem I can’t fix!” Pam joked. “We’ll have to call for roadside assistance. I’m afraid it’s going to be a while.”

Unfortunately, Pam was right. More than an hour later, they finally made it to a **SERVICE STATION**, where Mateo refueled. But by the time the van pulled up in front of the exhibition pavilion, the doors were **locked**.

“Oh no!” Blanca exclaimed, looking at the

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A DISASTROUS DAY

hours posted on the door. “They were only open until **NOON** today!”

“It’s all my fault,” Mateo replied, looking down.

Colette sighed, disappointed.

“It’s all right,” she said. “We’ll just have to **try again** tomorrow.”

“Tomorrow afternoon we have Dr. Meyer’s conference,” Paulina reminded everyone. “But



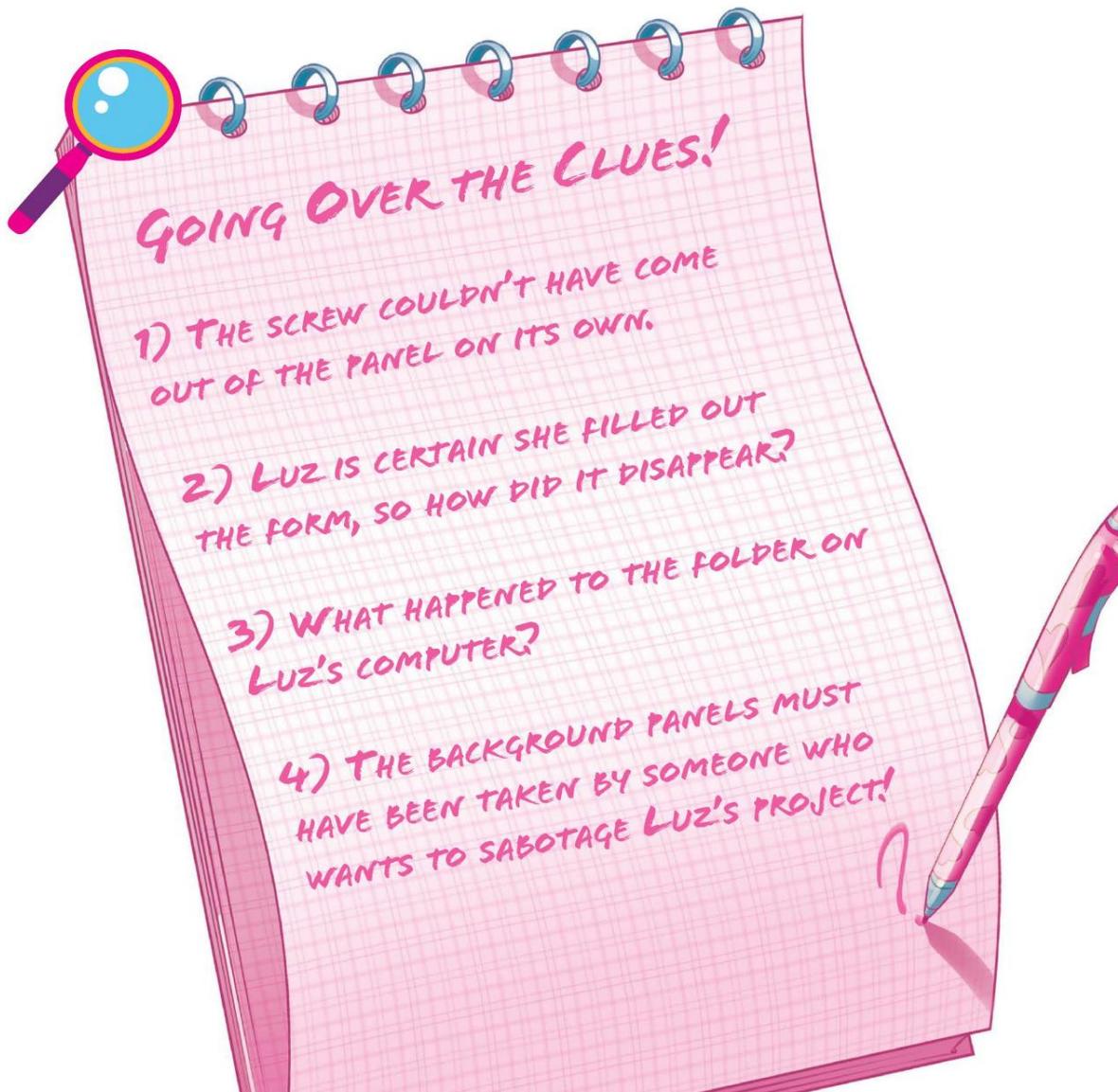
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A DISASTROUS DAY



we'll have all morning to try to find Luz's panels."

"Hopefully everything will go more **smoothly** then," Violet said.



GOING OVER THE CLUES!

1) THE SCREW COULDN'T HAVE COME OUT OF THE PANEL ON ITS OWN.

2) LUZ IS CERTAIN SHE FILLED OUT THE FORM, SO HOW DID IT DISAPPEAR?

3) WHAT HAPPENED TO THE FOLDER ON LUZ'S COMPUTER?

4) THE BACKGROUND PANELS MUST HAVE BEEN TAKEN BY SOMEONE WHO WANTS TO SABOTAGE LUZ'S PROJECT!

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A NEW ANGLE

There were just a few days until the opening of Luz's show, and the Thea Sisters were running out of **time** to help their friend. Worried that they wouldn't be able to solve the mystery in time, the five friends found themselves awake **super early** the next morning.

"We have an hour before we're supposed to meet Mateo, and Blanca is still sleeping," Pamela pointed out. "What should we do?"

"Why don't we take a walk?" Nicky suggested. "Maybe it will help us clear our heads."

"Great idea," Violet said, and she and her friends walked until they reached a little park. There, they sat on a **bench** and ate some *conchas* — sweet, colorful Mexican breakfast

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buns — that Pam bought at a bakery along the way.

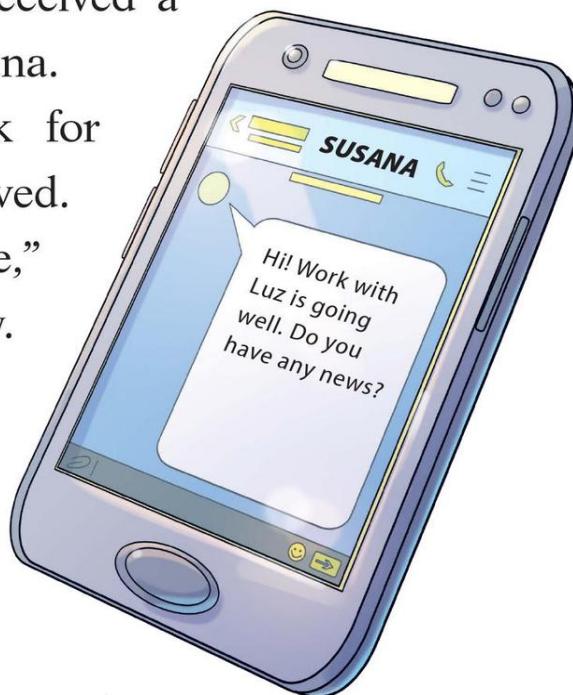
As they ate, Nicky received a text message from Susana.

“She’s sweet to ask for **UPDATES**,” Colette observed.

“Hey, wait a minute,” Paulina said suddenly. “**Susana** has been spending a lot of time in the exhibition space — we can ask her if she noticed anything unusual around Luz’s stand!”

“I’ll call her!” Nicky squeaked. Then she **dialed** Susana’s number and put her on squeakerphone.

“Hmm,” Susana replied. “I’m sorry, but I



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A NEW ANGLE

don't remember seeing anything strange."

"Did you see anyone **MILLING** around near Luz's space?" Colette asked.

"No strangers," Susana replied. "Just her friend **Mateo**."

"Mateo?" Paulina asked. "You mean when we were there?"

"Yes, and he was there by himself, too,"



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Susana said. “The morning after the trip to Teotihuacán, I got to the **Pavilion** pretty early. I saw him there then. I figured Luz had sent him to deliver something with his van.”

The Thea Sisters exchanged worried looks and **QUICKLY** said good-bye to Susana.

“So Mateo was in the exhibition hall the morning Luz’s panels **disappeared**,” Pamela said. “But he must have left soon after that, because Luz didn’t find him there when she arrived.”

“Actually, he got there after Blanca that day, remember?” Nicky pointed out. “Luz called both of them to tell them about the **missing** panels.”

“We’ve been **FRAMING** things wrong,” Paulina said thoughtfully.

“Huh?” Nicky asked. “What do you mean?”

“When you take a photograph, you highlight

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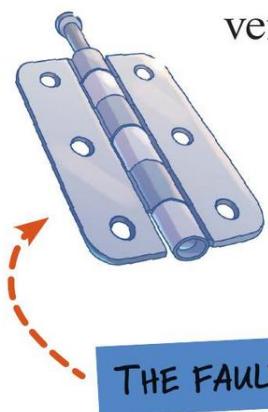
A NEW ANGLE

a detail and place it in the **center** of the frame,” Paulina explained. “We had the wrong subject at the center of our **investigation**, leaving the right one in the background.”

“You mean we focused solely on Susana and left out everyone else, including Mateo,” Violet concluded.

“Exactly,” Paulina replied. “We need to approach this from a new **ANGLE**. Mateo had more **opportunities** than anyone else to sabotage Luz.”

The Thea Sisters reexamined everything that had happened and realized Mateo looked very suspicious.



“The morning the screw came out of the hinge, Mateo offered to bring the easels into the room while Luz waited for us outside,” Pamela recalled. “So he had the

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A NEW ANGLE

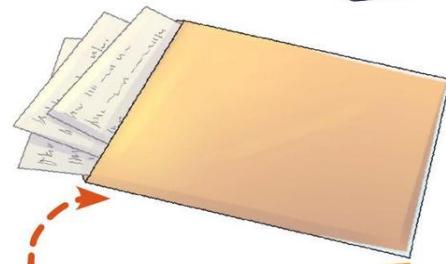


chance to **remove** the screw without being seen!"

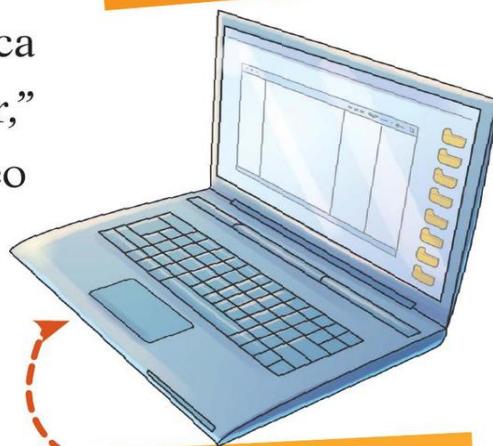
"And Luz said when she **filled out** the registration forms, Mateo and Blanca were both there with her," Violet added. "So Mateo could have removed one of the **forms** from the envelope then."

"And remember what happened in the **Chapultepec Forest**?" Colette chimed in.

"Mateo didn't want to go boating with us, so he stayed back



THE LOST DOCUMENT



THE FILE THAT WAS ERASED



THE MISSING PANELS

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with Luz's backpack. He could have easily erased the file then!"

"Finally, Susana saw Mateo at the exhibition hall by himself the morning the **PANELS** mysteriously disappeared," Nicky said. "But when he met up with Luz and Blanca, he never mentioned that he had already been there!"

"Great Gouda!" Pamela exclaimed. "This means Mateo may have caused all those problems with the van yesterday. Maybe he wanted to slow down our **investigation**."

"But **why**?" Violet asked. "Why would Mateo do this to Luz? She's one of his closest **friends**!"

"There's only one way to find out," Colette concluded. "We have to **talk** to Mateo. Let's go back to Blanca's house!"

But when the Thea Sisters got back, Blanca told them that Mateo was meeting them that

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afternoon at the conference. The mice were hesitant to tell Blanca their **SUSPICIONS** until they had a chance to talk to Mateo.

“I guess we aren’t going to solve this **STRANGE** mystery just yet, sisters,” Pamela said when the friends were alone again. “We have a **busy** afternoon ahead of us, but hopefully it will also be **full of answers!**”

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AN UNEXPECTED DISCOVERY

The Thea Sisters couldn't think of a single reason why Mateo would want to sabotage his **BEST FRIEND'S** project. But they decided to **confront** him and get some answers!

“Are you **EXCITED**, Paulina?” Luz asked when they arrived at the conference with Blanca that afternoon.

“Yes, very much!” Paulina replied as she looked around for Mateo. “Is Mateo here yet?”

“No, I guess he’s **RUNNING LATE** again,” Blanca replied as she **SAT DOWN** in the audience with her friends.

Soon Dr. Meyer walked onto the stage for her **introductory remarks**. Paulina popped up from her seat and rushed to the front of the room.

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The conference took the Thea Sisters' minds off Mateo for the afternoon: They were so **delighted** by Paulina's photos and her presentation on monarch butterflies, they couldn't focus on anything else!

Blanca, Luz, and the Thea Sisters were thrilled to see the big **SMILE** on Paulina's snout at the round of applause the audience gave at the end of the presentation.

“**GREAT JOB!**” Colette exclaimed, hugging her friend as she got off the stage.

“At first I was so nervous my paws wouldn't stop **shaking**,” Paulina admitted. “But in the end, I could have gone on for hours!”



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AN UNEXPECTED DISCOVERY

Suddenly, the look on Paulina's snout turned serious.

"Look!" she squeaked. "There's Mateo! Let's go talk to him!"

"Hi!" Mateo greeted the mouselets. "Nice job, Paulina. Have you seen Luz and Blanca?"

"Yes, but first we need to talk to you," Violet said, holding him back.



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The Thea Sisters quickly outlined all that had happened over the past few days and then told him their **SUSPICIONS**.

“Honestly, we don’t understand why anyone would do something like that to a friend,” Nicky admitted. “But the more we thought about it, the more the **CLUES** point to you.”

Paulina nodded.

“So we have to ask you a **question**,” Paulina said. “Are you the one responsible for sabotaging Luz’s project?”

“How could you think that?” Mateo asked as he became red in the snout.

Violet put a paw on Mateo’s shoulder.

“Mateo, it’s time for the **truth**,” she said firmly. “It was you, wasn’t it?”

At those words, Mateo hung his head.

“You’re right,” he finally admitted, his voice trembling. “It was me. **But you don’t**

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understand! If Luz wins the contest, she'll leave Mexico City for an entire year. She's always been a part of my life. I can't think of being without her, so I had to stop her."

"**I don't believe it!**" came a voice from behind them.

The Thea Sisters and Mateo turned to see Luz standing there, a look of **disbelief** on her snout.

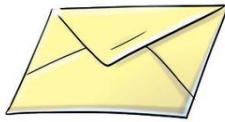
"Luz! Please, let me explain!" Mateo pleaded desperately.

"I've heard enough," Luz replied, and then she scampered off in **TEARS**.

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SINCERE REGRET

Mateo tried everything to get Luz to forgive him. First he fixed the background panels of her **FRIDA KAHLO** exhibit. After setting everything up, he added lots of plants that were similar to those in the garden at **La Casa Azul**, just as Luz had planned.

Then he tried again and again to reach out to Luz by text and email, but it was no use. Luz made it clear that she didn't want to squeak to Mateo. She was too **hurt**.

Mateo sat on the floor in Blanca's living room.

“Do you think Luz will ever **FORGIVE ME**?” he asked the Thea Sisters.

“Mateo, we've already explained that you need to give her more time,” Blanca said patiently. “What you did was wrong and very

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serious. You can't expect her to forgive you right away! She's **hurt**."

"Blanca is right," Colette agreed. "You behaved **badly**, and you betrayed her. She trusted you."

"**But I Can't Wait!**" Mateo exclaimed. "Tomorrow is the opening of the show. If Luz wins, she'll be gone for a year, and then it will be **impossible** to fix things with her!"

"Put yourself in her shoes," Paulina said gently. "Why should Luz believe you if you say you've changed from one day to the next?"

Mateo was quiet for a moment. Then he turned to his friends with a sad smile.

"You're right," he said. "The **TRUTH**



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SINCERE REGRET

is, I haven't changed. I'm still scared of losing my friend forever! The only thing that's changed is the reason. Up until a few days ago, I was **scared** at the thought of losing Luz because of the scholarship. But now I'm sad because I know I lost her by being so **selfish**."

A tear rolled down Mateo's snout. He seemed to have finally realized what he had done to his **dear friend**.

"I wish I could go back in time and **ERASE** all the pain I caused Luz," Mateo said with a sigh.

"**You can't go back**," Violet said. "But maybe we can help Luz leave this terrible mess behind her and convince her that it's time to move **forward!**"

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A BUTTERFLY KNOWS THE WAY HOME

The Thea Sisters knew Luz was right to be so upset. But they also didn't want her to lose a good friend forever, if she could learn to forgive him. So they decided to **help** him.

The five friends and Blanca caught up with Luz at the printing shop where she was picking up the final materials for her exhibit at the art show. The friends sat together while they waited for the **prints**.

“I’m so glad you didn’t leave right after the **conference** and that you stayed in Mexico City until the **opening** of my show,” Luz said.

“We wouldn’t have missed this event for anything in the world!” Paulina assured their friend.

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Colette took advantage of the moment to squeak on **Mateo's** behalf.

“And I know there’s someone else who doesn’t want to miss it,” Colette said softly.

Luz seemed to understand **immediately** who Colette was talking about.

“If you mean Mateo, I don’t want him there,” Luz said stiffly.

“Mateo behaved **TERribly**,” Nicky admitted quickly. “He lied to you, he only thought about himself, and he stood in the way of a very important dream. You have every right to be **angry** with him. We would understand if you chose not to forgive him.”

“But you should know that he realizes how badly he messed up,” Pamela added. “He knows he was **selfish** and that he took the low road.”

“We just wanted you to know how much

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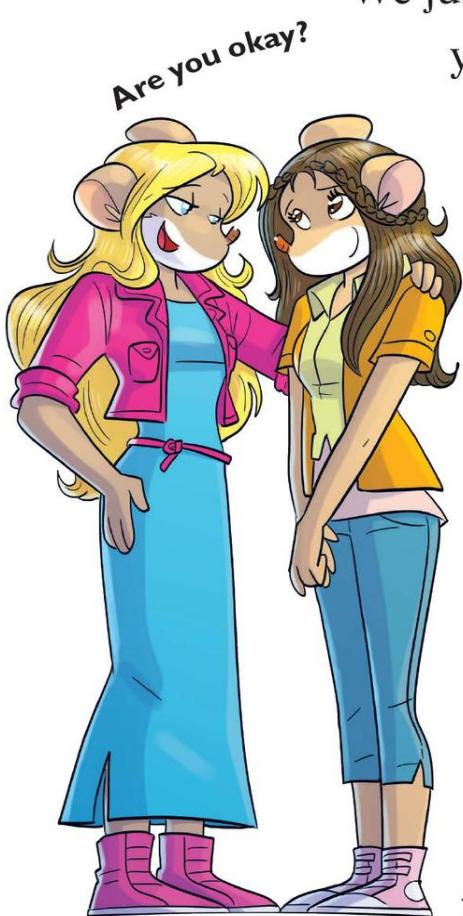
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A BUTTERFLY KNOWS THE WAY HOME

Mateo regrets what he did,” Violet explained. “This competition is about your dream for the **future**. I’m **SURE** in your heart you always thought Mateo would be part of your future.

We just want you to be sure about your decision, that’s all.”



“**THANK YOU**, but I’m not going to change my mind,” Luz finally said as she stood up to get her prints. “Mateo **disappointed** me too much. I don’t want to have anything to do with him!”

“Well, we tried,” Colette told her friends as she joined them outside the store. “Hopefully with

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some more **time** she'll be able to forgive Mateo eventually."

"Let's video call Mateo and let him know we didn't have much success," Nicky said, taking out her phone.

She opened the video chat app on her phone and called Mateo. But as the phone **rang**,



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she felt a paw on her shoulder. When she **TURNED**, Nicky was snout-to-snout with Luz.

“Are you calling Mateo?” the mouselet asked.

The Thea Sisters nodded.

“**Can I talk to him?**” Luz asked as she reached out for Nicky’s phone.

“I’m so **ANGRY** at you,” Luz began.

Mateo nodded without squeaking.

“But I don’t think you know **why** I’m so mad,” Luz continued. “It’s partly because of what you did, but it’s also because you thought I would **forget** about you if I won the scholarship.”

“I was **scared**,” Mateo mumbled.

“That’s not an excuse. The symbol of our **friendship** is the monarch butterfly, remember?” Luz reminded him. “And

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monarch butterflies always know how to get home. They may fly thousands of miles away, but their **hearts** never forget the way back.”

“So does this mean you **forgive me?**”

Mateo asked hopefully.

“No,” she said. “But I think I can soon. Now why don’t you get over here? Tomorrow is a really important day, and **I need my best friend!**”



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A COLORFUL HEART

The opening of the art show was a real party: Luz was finally able to **show off** the hard work she had done on her Frida Kahlo project. The event was also a **CELEBRATION** for everyone who had stood by her those last few days: Blanca, the Thea Sisters, her new friend Susana, and even **Mateo**, her best friend since childhood.

The announcement that Luz had **WON** the competition was just an extra reason for joy in a moment that was already filled with **friendship** and **happiness**!

“Hooray for Luz!” Mateo exclaimed as he **congratulated** his dear friend.

“Hooray!” everyone replied.

“So, Luz, are you ready to leave for a year **ABROAD**?” Paulina asked.

Luz nodded and smiled happily.

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“I’m ready to **FLY** away again, just like a monarch butterfly!” she said, laughing.

“And we’re ready, too,” Blanca added. “Mateo and I **studied** the university calendar for next year so we can come visit you when we’re on breaks!”

“But with Luz leaving, we have one less volunteer tour guide in our group,” Susana said sadly.



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A COLORFUL HEART

“No problem,” Mateo replied, smiling brightly. **“I’ll take her place!”**

“That’s terrific!” Violet exclaimed. “You’ll be a great tour guide, Mateo.”

“Thanks,” Mateo replied. “I really hope I’ll do a good job! It will be hard to replace Luz. But I want to help and also make up for all the **problems** I’ve caused lately.”

“I think that’s a wonderful idea,” Colette agreed. “Now why don’t we all get a **GROUP PHOTO** together in front of this beautiful backdrop?”

Everyone came together in front of Luz’s artwork.

“CHEESE!” the group squeaked happily.

Colette took a look at the image on her phone and sighed softly.

“What is it, Colette?” Pam asked. “Did it come out badly?”

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Colette shook her head.

“Not at all,” she replied. “I’m just always amazed at the **COLORS** here. Look at this background. They’re the same colors we have on Whale Island, but for some reason everything looks more **vibrant** and **beautiful** here in Mexico!”

“You’re right,” Violet agreed. “And the more I look at everything here, the **prettier** it seems!”

“The best thing about the colors of this trip is that we won’t need a **PHOTOGRAPH** to remember them,” Paulina reminded her friends. “Because the colors of



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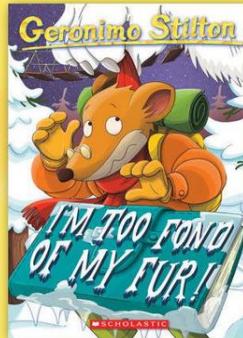
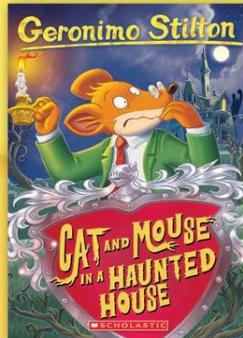
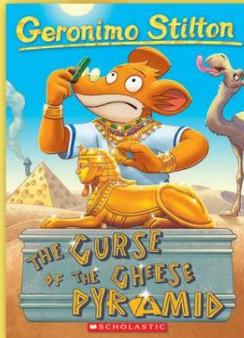
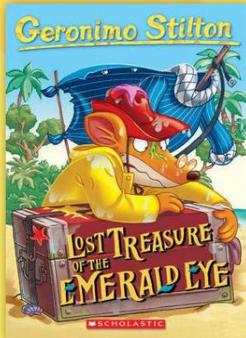
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Don't miss a single fabumouse adventure!

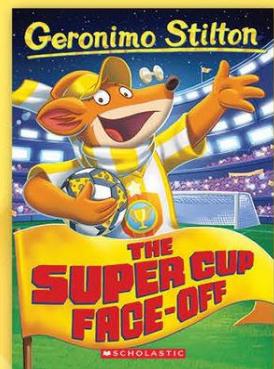


- #1 Lost Treasure of the Emerald Eye
- #2 The Curse of the Cheese Pyramid
- #3 Cat and Mouse in a Haunted House
- #4 I'm Too Fond of My Fur!
- #5 Four Mice Deep in the Jungle
- #6 Paws Off, Cheddarface!
- #7 Red Pizzas for a Blue Count
- #8 Attack of the Bandit Cats
- #9 A Fabumouse Vacation for Geronimo
- #10 All Because of a Cup of Coffee
- #11 It's Halloween, You 'Fraidy Mouse!
- #12 Merry Christmas, Geronimo!
- #13 The Phantom of the Subway
- #14 The Temple of the Ruby of Fire
- #15 The Mona Mousa Code
- #16 A Cheese-Colored Camper
- #17 Watch Your Whiskers, Stilton!
- #18 Shipwreck on the Pirate Islands
- #19 My Name Is Stilton, Geronimo Stilton
- #20 Surf's Up, Geronimo!
- #21 The Wild, Wild West
- #22 The Secret of Cacklefur Castle
- A Christmas Tale
- #23 Valentine's Day Disaster
- #24 Field Trip to Niagara Falls
- #25 The Search for Sunken Treasure
- #26 The Mummy with No Name
- #27 The Christmas Toy Factory
- #28 Wedding Crasher
- #29 Down and Out Down Under

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- #30 The Mouse Island Marathon
- #31 The Mysterious Cheese Thief
- Christmas Catastrophe
- #32 Valley of the Giant Skeletons
- #33 Geronimo and the Gold Medal Mystery
- #34 Geronimo Stilton, Secret Agent
- #35 A Very Merry Christmas
- #36 Geronimo's Valentine
- #37 The Race Across America
- #38 A Fabumouse School Adventure
- #39 Singing Sensation
- #40 The Karate Mouse
- #41 Mighty Mount Kilimanjaro
- #42 The Peculiar Pumpkin Thief
- #43 I'm Not a Supermouse!
- #44 The Giant Diamond Robbery
- #45 Save the White Whale!
- #46 The Haunted Castle
- #47 Run for the Hills, Geronimo!
- #48 The Mystery in Venice
- #49 The Way of the Samurai
- #50 This Hotel Is Haunted!
- #51 The Enormouse Pearl Heist
- #52 Mouse in Space!
- #53 Rumble in the Jungle
- #54 Get into Gear, Stilton!
- #55 The Golden Statue Plot
- #56 Flight of the Red Bandit
- #57 The Stinky Cheese Vacation
- #58 The Super Chef Contest
- #59 Welcome to Moldy Manor
- #60 The Treasure of Easter Island
- #61 Mouse House Hunter
- #62 Mouse Overboard!
- #63 The Cheese Experiment
- #64 Magical Mission
- #65 Bollywood Burglary
- #66 Operation: Secret Recipe
- #67 The Chocolate Chase
- #68 Cyber-Thief Showdown
- #69 Hug a Tree, Geronimo
- #70 The Phantom Bandit
- #71 Geronimo on Ice!
- #72 The Hawaiian Heist
- #73 The Missing Movie
- #74 Happy Birthday, Geronimo!
- #75 The Sticky Situation
- #76 Superstore Surprise
- #77 The Last Resort Oasis
- #78 Mysterious Eye of the Dragon
- #79 Garbage Dump Disaster
- #80 Have a Heart, Geronimo

Up Next:



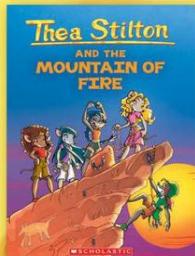
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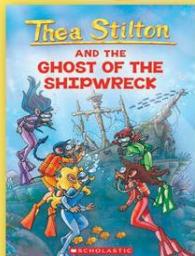
**Don't miss any of
these exciting Thea
Sisters adventures!**



Thea Stilton and the Dragon's Code



Thea Stilton and the Mountain of Fire



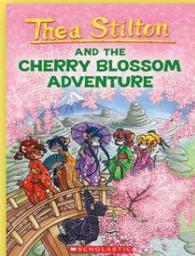
Thea Stilton and the Ghost of the Shipwreck



Thea Stilton and the Secret City



Thea Stilton and the Mystery in Paris



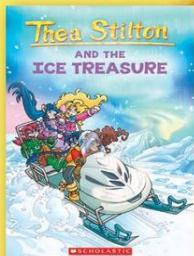
Thea Stilton and the Cherry Blossom Adventure



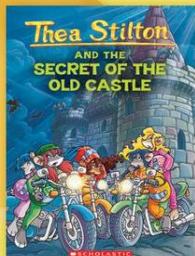
Thea Stilton and the Star Castaways



Thea Stilton: Big Trouble in the Big Apple



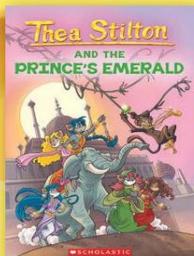
Thea Stilton and the Ice Treasure



Thea Stilton and the Secret of the Old Castle



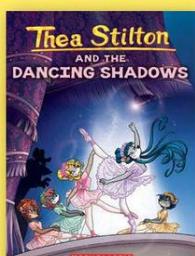
Thea Stilton and the Blue Scarab Hunt



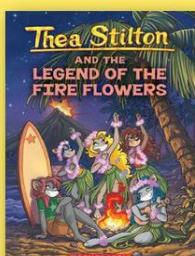
Thea Stilton and the Prince's Emerald



Thea Stilton and the Mystery on the Orient Express



Thea Stilton and the Dancing Shadows



Thea Stilton and the Legend of the Fire Flowers



Thea Stilton and the Spanish Dance Mission

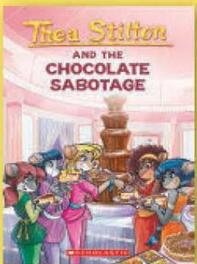
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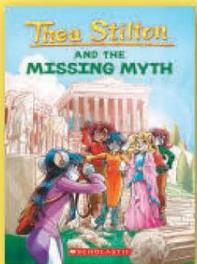
Thea Stilton and the
Journey to the Lion's Den



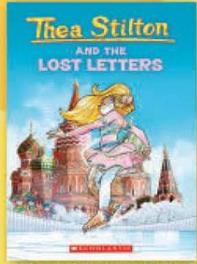
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Great Tulip Heist



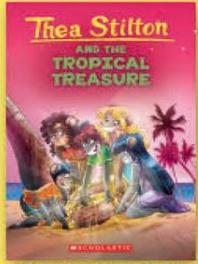
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Chocolate Sabotage



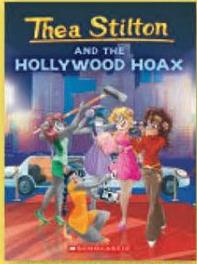
Thea Stilton and the
Missing Myth



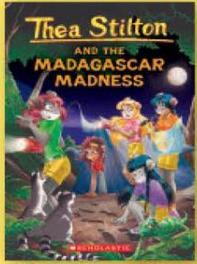
Thea Stilton and the
Lost Letters



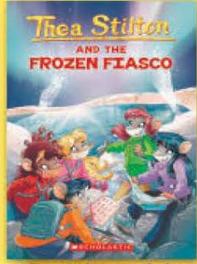
Thea Stilton and the
Tropical Treasure



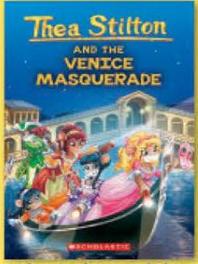
Thea Stilton and the
Hollywood Hoax



Thea Stilton and the
Madagascar Madness



Thea Stilton and the
Frozen Fiasco



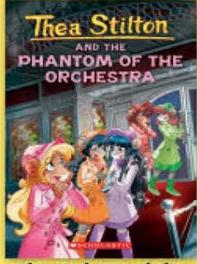
Thea Stilton and the
Venice Masquerade



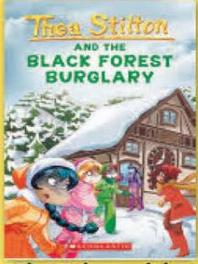
Thea Stilton and the
Niagara Splash



Thea Stilton and the
Riddle of the Ruins



Thea Stilton and the
Phantom of the Orchestra



Thea Stilton and the
Black Forest Burglary



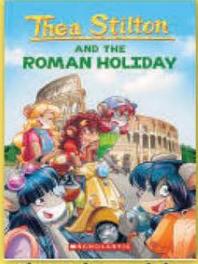
Thea Stilton and the
Race for the Gold



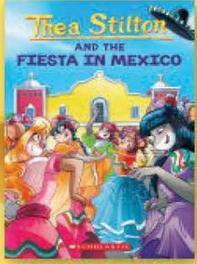
Thea Stilton and the
Rainforest Rescue



Thea Stilton and the
American Dream



Thea Stilton and the
Roman Holiday

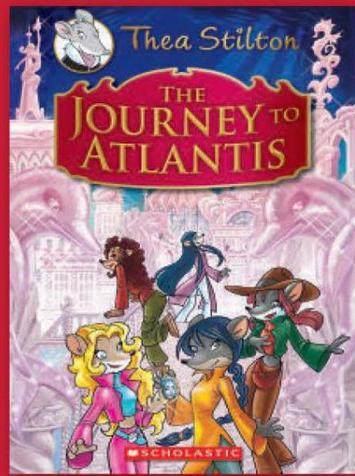


Thea Stilton and the
Fiesta in Mexico

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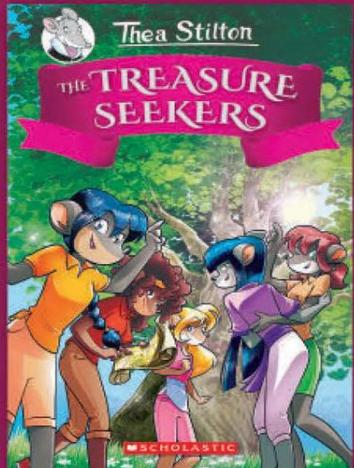
Thea Stilton



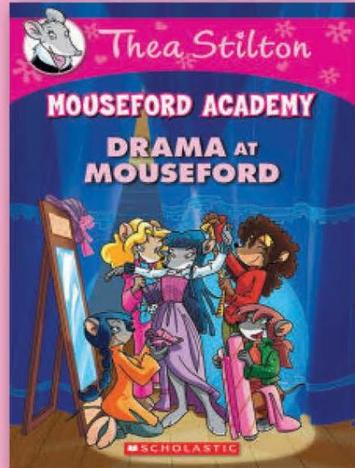
Secret Fairies



Don't miss any of these exciting series featuring the Thea Sisters!



Treasure Seekers



Mouseford Academy

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The Thea Sisters are going to Mexico City! They have been invited to be a part of a team researching monarch butterflies. Their friend Luz is an artist who is inspired by the butterflies and the beautiful culture of Mexico. When her mural goes missing just before her art show, the mouselets are on the case! Can they return the missing mural in time?

PAMELA
is a peacemaker
who can't stand
arguments.

PAULINA
loves traveling
and helping other
rodents.

VIOLET
is detail-oriented
and always open
to new things.

NICKY
is always in a good
mood when she's
outdoors.

COLETTE
is energetic and
full of great ideas.



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